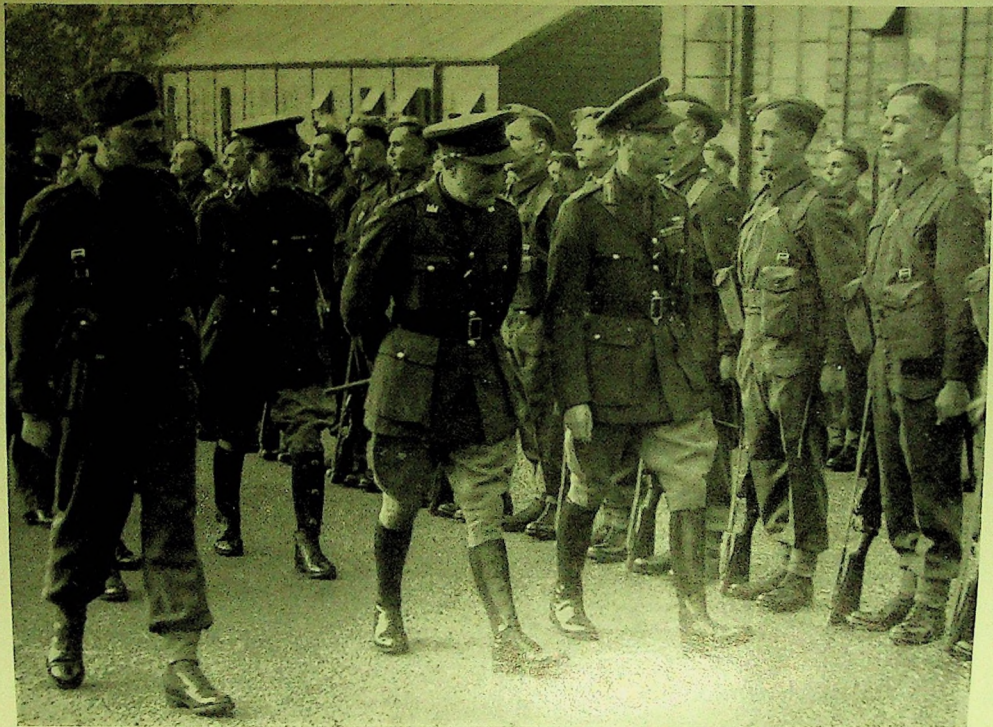


WE ALSO SERVED

THE STORY OF THE HOME GUARD
IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND
THE ISLE OF ELY
1940-1943





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H.M. The King inspecting 2nd Bn. The Cambridgeshire Regiment (T.A.), October 22nd, 1941

"WE ALSO SERVED"

THE STORY OF THE HOME
GUARD IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE
AND THE ISLE OF ELY

1940—1943

PRIVATELY PRINTED FOR
THE CAMBS. AND ISLE OF ELY TERRITORIAL ARMY ASSOCIATION
BY W. HEFFER AND SONS LTD.,
CAMBRIDGE

PREFACE

This story has been put together in their spare time by the staff of the Territorial Army Association which had the privilege of administering the Home Guard in this county. The Home Guard who did so much in their own spare time will perhaps forgive its omissions and its shortcomings, for the full story of all that has been done would fill many volumes.

We are principally indebted to Messrs. W. Heffer & Sons of Cambridge, who in spite of all war-time difficulties undertook the printing of the book on very generous terms. Our thanks are due to Lt.-Colonel G. L. Archer who wrote Chapter I, and to the following authors and publishers for permission to quote from their works:

The Town of Cambridge, Dr. Gray. (Messrs. Heffer & Sons.)

Unexpected, Sir D. Brownrigg. (Messrs. Hutchinson & Co.)

Highways and Byways in Cambridge and Ely, E. Conybeare. (Messrs. Macmillan & Co.)

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We also acknowledge the courtesy of Messrs. Stearn & Sons, Cambridge, the Eastern Press Agency, Cambridge, Messrs. E. L. Witcombe, of Wisbech, and the Ministry of Information, for permission to publish their photographs.

Finally we must thank the department of the Censorship for dealing with the subject-matter very promptly, and for the visible evidence that at least one reader has managed to complete the book from cover to cover.

CAMBRIDGE

January, 1944.

Come away, come away,
Hark to the Summons!
Come in your war array,
Gentles and commons.

Come every hill-plaid and
True heart that wears one,
Come every steel blade, and
Strong hand that bears one.

Leave the deer, leave the steer,
Leave nets and barges;
Come with your fighting gear,
Broadswords and targes.

Come as the winds come, when
Forests are rended.
Come as the waves come, when
Navies are stranded;
Faster come, faster come,
Faster and faster,
Chief, vassal, page and groom,
Tenant and master.

—*Scots Ballad.*

FOREWORD

While you of the Home Guard held the island fortress at home another Army tried to hold, against overwhelming odds, the island fortress of Singapore, ten thousand miles away. In that Army were men of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely. Many of them gave their lives—a few escaped—but the majority were doomed to a long and dreary imprisonment.

The day of liberation will dawn when these will return to their homes, and so this book has been written to raise funds to help them when the need arises. I therefore ask you in their name to buy this book as a memento of your service, with the knowledge that in so doing you will be helping them.

Remember that they did not count the cost. They gave all that they could.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Richard D. 105453". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "R". Below the signature is a horizontal line.

H.M. Lieutenant.

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CHAPTER I

OUR FOREFATHERS

"Let us now commend famous men and our fathers of whom we are begotten."

This little story written about the Home Guard is meant not only to commemorate individual famous men, but all those of them our fathers in past centuries who have contributed by their pluck and endurance and love of liberty to preserve our country and make it truly great.

It is not intended to write a military history of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely; such would, indeed, be a very lengthy task, for Cambridgeshire men have, through the centuries, contributed their fair share of fighting for their country throughout the whole of Europe and, indeed, throughout the world. But, as before mentioned, whilst fully acknowledging the military virtues of Cambridgeshire men in general, it is proposed only to consider briefly those civilian soldiers who, like the old Jewish masons on the return from exile in Babylon, laboured at rebuilding Jerusalem with their sword in one hand and their trowel in the other.

And so we will more particularly think of those who are prepared to defend their country, and their liberties, whilst at the same time carrying on their ordinary occupations, whether behind the plough, behind the counter, or in the office; the true Home Guard of England.

We must go back in our history to the remote days when Julius Caesar conquered, or rather shall we say reconnoitred, Britain; because a real conquest of Britain was only carried out in the early years of the Christian era by the Emperor Claudius, who wished to make Britain more subdued to the Roman Empire of that time. This campaign was quite successful; in addition to that, the allegiance of many of the British nobles had been secured by the Emperor by means of large monetary advances and also the leading senators in Rome were immersed in money-lending transactions to finance the somewhat careless and ostentatious British chiefs and landowners.

It is a great mistake to imagine that the old Britons were complete Barbarians, as historians of the Victorian era were so fond of impressing on the minds of small children by their histories. The Britons were quite a civilised folk and originally came over from the continent, being mainly composed of what are known as Belgic

tribes. Their civilisation, though not so complete as that of Rome, was yet a complete civilisation compared to the life of so-called Barbaric tribes devoid of weapons, wheeled vehicles, arts and comforts of life. At that time Britain was divided up amongst various "Kings," or what we should call local chieftains, and the Romans, to ensure their hold on the country, very often played one off against the other.

About A.D. 60, when the bulk of the Roman army was far away on the frontier between Lincoln, Anglesey and Caerleon on Usk, the whole supposedly subjugated region in its rear broke into open revolt. There were many reasons for this outbreak. A colony for military settlers had been founded at Camulodunum or Colchester; the land had been taken by force, without compensation, from British farmers, whilst the personal conduct of the soldier colonists was licentious and oppressive in the highest degree. Secondly, repayment was called for of the heavy loans which had been made by Claudius to his British supporters. And, lastly, Seneca, the Roman philosopher, had chosen this moment to call in various loans amounting altogether to £100,000 in our British values. Thus scores of British landowners were confronted with ruin if not slavery. To all this mass of combustible material the torch was applied by the abominable behaviour of Roman officers towards Boudicca or Boadicea, the widow of Prasutagus, the late King of the Iceni. The Iceni territory included Norfolk and neighbouring parts, indeed the bulk of East Anglia, and occupied a semi-independent position. By the will this King made he hoped to ensure an honourable security for his family, but there was a dispute between some of the Roman civil officers on the subject of the execution of the will and centurions were sent to take over the share that had been bequeathed to the Emperor. These officers were the most disreputable characters; they despoiled the kingdom, flogged Queen Boadicea and violated her daughters. The result might have been foreseen; rebellion was imminent, and these outrages gave it a leader of the highest rank.

Boadicea, incensed by this inhuman treatment, led the revolt, and in a short time achieved greater successes than all the British leaders before her. The Iceni rebels began by sacking the unfortified town of Camulodunum, a settlement of soldier colonists, whilst a senior Roman general was isolated with two of his four legions far away in the island of Anglesey. Boadicea then turned to meet another Roman general, Cerealis, who was advancing to attack her with the 9th legion from its station at Lincoln, and inflicted upon him a crushing defeat. The infantry of his force was entirely annihilated and he only succeeded in escaping to Lincoln with the survivors of his cavalry. Meanwhile the Roman general Suetonius was able to force his way through the Midlands to London. Having arrived at London with only 10,000 men, Suetonius hesitated as to whether

he should make a stand there or not, but having learnt of the disaster which had befallen the 9th legion he decided it was necessary to evacuate London and move to the West of England to gain touch with the 2nd legion, then quartered at Caerleon Cardiff, which had received orders to march at once to rejoin him. Boadicea's army reached London and indulged in fearful massacre, but eventually she and her troops were cut to pieces in a tremendous battle which took place between her and Suetonius somewhere in the country West of London, as a result of which the Icenian troops were almost completely wiped out.

After the Roman power was withdrawn from England the Pagan tribes from Denmark, and the mouth of the Elbe, known as the Jutes, and later the Angles and the Saxons, successively infiltrated up the rivers on the Eastern and Southern coasts of England and drove back the Britons gradually into the country of Wales and further to the north. A few of these British are supposed also to have sought refuge in the Cambridgeshire fens. The Saxons gradually established themselves in England after much warfare amongst their tribes until at last there were Saxon kings of England, among whom Alfred the Great was the most famous in history. But they in their turn were exposed to the revenge of the Vikings or Danes who descended for loot and plunder from the fjords of Norway along the North-Eastern, Eastern and Southern coasts of England. These Viking rovers were entirely ruthless in their treatment of the unfortunate people whom they assailed. Monasteries and Churches were destroyed by them for the mere pleasure of destruction and loot, and clergy and nuns were equally slaughtered by the Vikings in their raids, together with those fighting men who stood up to oppose them. Some 200 years after St. Etheldreda founded her abbey at Ely it was destroyed by the pillaging Danes, and for another two hundred years or so, until the Danish king Canute came to the throne, England was harried and occupied by these piratical rovers.

In those days it must be remembered that Cambridgeshire did not bear that name. Cambridge was known as Granta Bridge and Cambridgeshire therefore as Grantabridgeshire, and that name existed until after the Norman Conquest and is to be met with, indeed, in the great Domesday Book. About the year 1005 there was a fearful raid by Swend Forkbeard, the monarch of a great Scandinavian empire, purposing to add England to his dominions. Under the weak sceptre of Ethelred the Unready, nothing but local resistance had been offered him; and here alone was the local resistance serious. East Anglia was then under the governorship of the hero Ulfcytel. He gathered all his Saxon levies to meet the foe at Ringmere Hcath, near Thetford, but the heart had been taken out of the English levies by the ferocious reputation of Forkbeard, for as the old chronicler says: "All England did quake

before him like a reed-bed rustling in the wind." The battle was speedily over; "soon fled the East Angles; there stood Grantabryg-shire fast only."

Cambridgeshire men of these days may well, when they visit Ringmere Heath, remember their valiant forefathers and raise their hats to the memory of the men of Grantabryg-shire who alone stood fast in the day of battle.

Some years previously, again in the reign of Ethelred the Unready, a great Danish invasion in East Anglia gave birth to one of the most stirring poems of the English language, "The Song of Maldon." East Anglia was then governed by an "Alderman" named Brithnoth, and he, rising to the emergency as a true Christian hero, hurried to meet the foe, calling out all the local levies on the march. Duke Brithnoth was a true forerunner of the perfect type of English officer who does his best for his men whilst on active service. Passing Ramsey Abbey the Abbot had offered him hospitality, but only for himself and half-a-dozen picked friends; this niggardly invitation drew from Brithnoth a scornful answer, "Tell my Lord Abbot," he replied, "that I cannot fight without my men, neither will I feed without them." At Ely real hospitality was given to both the "Alderman" and his soldiers, and he requited their hospitality by the gift of various manors on his death, stipulating only that, if slain in battle, his body should be brought back to their church for burial. At Maldon, in Essex, on the river Blackwater, he met the Danes and, after a gallant struggle, the pirates were driven back to their ships, but at the cost of Brithnoth's own life. He was pierced by a spear and he sank dying to the ground, to the last exhorting his soldiers to fight on, and commending his own soul to God in famous and well-known lines. The Danes carried off his head, but his body was rescued and brought back to Ely, where it still reposes in Bishop West's chapel in Ely Cathedral.

Men of Cambridgeshire come next into the light of history at the time of the Norman conquest, during the famous siege of Ely by King William and the defence of the "Camp of Refuge" there by Hereward the Wake. Hereward, about whom a great deal of legend attaches, was a landowner in Lincolnshire and one of those who refused to submit to a Norman conqueror. The Isle of Ely became a refuge for all those who thought as he did, for the Norman was a thorough-going oppressor. A mixed company, indeed, of fugitives had gathered at Ely. Amongst them were sheriff, aldermen, bishops and abbots, who had been turned out of their offices to make room for Frenchmen, soldiers who refused to admit defeat, Archbishop Stigand of Canterbury, Ethelnoth of Durham, Morcar the last Earl of Northumbria, "with many a hundred more," both clergy and laity. Here at Ely they received shelter and hospitality from Thurstan the last of the English abbots of Ely. By general acclamation Hereward was chosen as their captain and fortified the

island against the Conqueror. Hearing of this, King William hastened to Cambridge with his army and invested the "Camp of Refuge" (so far as it was possible to invest it) both by land and water and built a castle at Wisbech on the north and at Reach on the south.

More than one attempt was made to assail the island, but without success. Rafts of trees and faggots capsized during one attempt, wooden causeways were destroyed by firing the reeds in another attempt, and King William finally withdrew to Brandon in Suffolk. Whilst there, according to tradition, Hereward turned himself into an intelligence officer by betaking himself to Brandon in the guise of a potter selling pots in order to learn the King's designs. However this may be, where force failed, treachery succeeded. At a threat from King William that he would grant to his supporters all the Abbey lands of Ely unless surrender was made, the Abbot and monks unknown to Hereward resolved to surrender and sent secret messages to William offering to submit on condition that the possession of the Abbey should be spared. To this the King agreed and, during Hereward's absence from Ely on a foraging expedition, the monks let the invaders in by a secret entrance into the Isle, while Hereward on his return, finding all was lost, barely escaped with his life.

Cambridgeshire in the reign of King Stephen, and till the Barons' wars terminating in the reign of King Henry III, suffered much damage and loss. Finally, all the local insurgents were overcome and the fortifications of Ely, and many other places, were thrown to the ground by King Henry III. The last storm of Ely was made by King Edward I whilst Prince of Wales.

Throughout the centuries of the Middle Ages there is nothing to chronicle connected with local military history, although Cambridgeshire men in common with all those of other parts of England, took part in the long wars against the French, but the Wars of the Roses do not seem to have affected the county. Local levies, under the Bishop of Ely, however, took part in the famous Battle of Flodden Field in Scotland in the reign of King Henry VIII and it is a matter of interest to know that King James of Scotland was slain at the very foot of the banner of St. Etheldreda, which was carried into battle by these local levies. But if local men did not take part for many years in the local defences of their homeland they were, nevertheless, ready and vigilant to protect themselves against any wrongs or alleged wrongs which they feared would be committed against them in the course of the changes which took place after the great English Reformation.

Amongst these changes were the movements connected with the drainage of the Fens in the seventeenth century. It must be remembered that the great bulk of the people who lived in the Fenlands had from time immemorial got their living as wildfowlers

and fishermen. Indeed, before the fens were drained, the quantities of eels alone which had to be caught and used as rents for tithes or fisheries was simply enormous, and many meres and sluggish streams abounded in the fens, which were exceptionally rich in fish and fowl. It can easily be imagined that whilst Londoners and townsmen generally had their eye on the fens to turn them into valuable agricultural property, the fenmen, who derived their living from the fact of the lands being fenlands, were not very keen to see this change, and the Earl of Bedford and his syndicate of Adventurers had many difficulties to contend with in commencing and continuing their drainage works.

The common practice of the local fenmen was to assemble together, fill up all the ditches which had been cut and destroy all banks that had been made, if necessary by force; and local history has preserved the name of an Ely worthy who acted as a self-constituted captain of the forces of those struggling to protect their liberties. His name was Anderson, and history relates that he arranged for a number of Ely, Littleport and Lakenheath men to meet close to Littleport to play the game of "Camping." This game was practically a game of football without either boundaries or rules and used in mediaeval times to be played by village against village and, of course, degenerated into a free fight with many victims. The "Camping Match" designed by Anderson was, of course, only an excuse for the considerable number of men gathered together for that purpose to destroy the drainage works of the early Adventurers. Local law and order seems to have been extremely feeble and pusillanimous. It is recorded that one of the Ely justices (in those days appointed by the Bishop of Ely) remonstrated with Anderson on Ely Market Place for doing such nasty things; whereupon the Justice was roundly told by Anderson that he was only a Bishop's justice and not a King's justice and altogether a poor fellow not to be taken any notice of. Anderson was eventually taken by the authorities and imprisoned in London, and so passes out of history.

A much greater man than Anderson was soon afterwards associated with Cambridgeshire and her "Home Guards," and that is Oliver Cromwell who for several years lived at Ely and farmed the tithes of the Dean and Chapter there, afterwards, during the Civil Wars, becoming the Governor of the Isle of Ely and a Colonel in the Parliamentary Army. He was the founder of the Eastern Counties Association which was really the backbone of the Parliamentary Army, and many of his Ironsides came from Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely. Whilst still a Colonel he drilled many of his Ironsides at St. Mary's Green in Ely.

After the termination of the Civil Wars in the latter part of the seventeenth century, in the reign of King William and Mary, the Army was furnished with 30,000 additional troops; amongst these

some were recruited partly from Cambridgeshire and district. This was the origin of the 30th (Cambridgeshire) Regiment which existed as a separate corps till the 30th June, 1881, and took part with distinction in a great number of campaigns in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In 1782, the 30th Regiment was "assigned to the County of Cambridge," the headquarters of recruiting being later established at Bury St. Edmunds and Ely. In 1881, under the new organisation, the 30th Cambridgeshires and the 59th Second Notts were attached to the 30th Regimental District and became the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the East Lancashire Regiment.

In the latter part of the 18th century England was threatened in the stormy period after the French Revolution when Napoleon made his name feared throughout Europe and pressed forward expeditions into Egypt with a view to reaching India. In those days many Englishmen felt that at such times they themselves should be prepared to defend their country and their homes, in addition to the paid Armed Forces of the Crown. "Loyal Associations" were therefore formed all over the country. In Cambridgeshire the only official records relate to the "Cambridge Patriotic Volunteers" commanded by Major Harwood, about 68 in number, who lasted until the year 1802. Other local corps no doubt existed, but there do not appear to be any official muster rolls filed about them. Ely certainly had a corps, called the "Ely Loyal Association," whose two colours now hang in the Cathedral, and there is a sword in existence which belonged to a sergeant of that Association. These corps were, however, sporadic and were unorganised to act together as battalions. Most of them came to an end in 1801 or 1802. In these years Napoleon was gradually collecting a flotilla of boats at Boulogne and other northern ports of France. The war broke out early in 1803; 170,000 French troops were concentrated round Boulogne, whilst other troops were held available elsewhere. The British nation rose to the occasion, the fleet was brought up to full strength and the Militia embodied to the number of 250,000 men under arms, of whom 110,000 were Regulars.

Meanwhile, the Volunteer Movement, the forerunner of our present Home Guards, spread over the country and in a few months there were 453,000 of these auxiliary forces available. These men were raised in local corps by towns and villages, the unit of organisation being a company. By the end of 1803 and in the early part of 1804 most of these corps were formed into a battalion organised under a colonel or a major and the county or district made up the battalion from their local companies. Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely formed out of their local corps or companies four battalions, the 1st Cambridge Battalion, the 2nd Ely Battalion, the 3rd Wisbech Battalion, and the 4th Bourn Bridge Battalion. Each battalion in every year of its existence performed a varying number

of days exercises, for which pay was drawn. Inspections of units were made four times a year by Regular officers appointed for that purpose. In addition to their days of exercises, these battalions were on "permanent duty" for three weeks at a time, marching to places like Bury St. Edmunds and Newmarket and Peterborough for carrying out this "permanent duty" or camp.

In 1868 the last camps of the old Volunteers appear to have been held in Saffron Walden, Bury St. Edmunds and Huntingdon, and this seems to have been the last year of the existence of these Volunteer Corps. Their uniform was similar to that worn by Line regiments, the red coat faced with yellow, yellow breeches, white gaiters and, for headdress, a black shako with a red and white feather. The arms supplied were the Brown Bess musket and bayonet. The story is told locally that in one of the companies of Ely Battalion two sworn foes were privates. It was quite a proper thing for people to have their own feathers in the shako instead of the ones supplied by the Government so as to look somewhat smarter than others. The disadvantage of this arrangement seems to have been as happened here. On a certain parade when one of the two enemies was in the front rank and the other in the rear rank, the order was given to fire in two ranks, front rank kneeling; the man in the rear rank could and did, shoot away the prized feather of his enemy in the front rank. This indeed actually took place and was told the writer by an old soldier whose father the rear rank man in question, had handed the story on to him.

The French fleet being shattered at the Battle of Trafalgar, Napoleon's plan to invade England came to nought; and he then withdrew his arms towards Austria and Russia. The Volunteer Corps were disbanded but the spirit then kindled lived on for the next generation to fan into flame in 1859, when fears were entertained for another invasion from France. Once again various local or administrative battalions or corps were formed, eventually becoming a battalion known as the 3rd Cambridgeshire Volunteer Battalion the Suffolk Regiment. This in its turn became the 1st Battalion the Cambridgeshire Regiment of the Territorial Army, under Lord Haldane's reforms of 1907.

There is no need for readers of this little history to be reminded of the modern Cambridgeshire Regiment which earned such a glorious record for itself in the war against Germany between the years 1914 and 1918. During that period it expanded into four battalions and, in addition, a Volunteer force was officially recognised by the Army Council. Three battalions of the Cambridgeshire Volunteer Regiment were formed, "The 1st Cambridge Battalion," "The 2nd Cambridgeshire Battalion," and "The 3rd Isle of Ely Battalion" under a County Commandant.

In commemoration of gallant service the Regimental colours

bear many battle honours including Ypres, The Somme, Passchendaele, and The Hindenburg Line.

In 1920, after the Great War, the 1st Battalion The Cambridgeshire Regiment was again reformed and throughout the period from that date until 1939, under extremely adverse circumstances and lack of interest, kept up the spirit and good name of the regiment. In 1939 it expanded into two battalions, "The 1st Battalion The Cambridgeshire Regiment" in the county of Cambridge, and "The 2nd Battalion The Cambridgeshire Regiment" in the Isle of Ely. These battalions carried out valuable work on defences and in training throughout the east of England and in other parts. Eventually they, with their East Anglian Division, went out of the country towards the Far East. On their way there the 2nd Battalion with its brigade was diverted from the Cape of Good Hope to Singapore, was pushed up country and saw heavy fighting in the mainland at Johore. The 1st Battalion, with other parts of the Division, had arrived in India and eventually were sent to Singapore, to arrive practically at the time of the surrender of that place to the Japanese.

The fortunes of war are indeed hard; good soldiers and good regiments have to suffer reverses for which they are not in the least responsible. This is so in the history of all the regiments of the British Army. But, through fair weather and through foul, it is the spirit which sustains and maintains men throughout the centuries, and that spirit of courage and endurance has never been found lacking in Cambridgeshire men.

CHAPTER II

THE LION AT BAY

If the pages of England's history could be projected on a screen one of the things that would astonish us most would be the resemblance between the reactions of our forefathers at the time of the Spanish Armada or the Napoleonic threat and our own reactions in the days that followed Dunkirk. It is difficult to recapture the real emotions of 1940. Already the picture has faded, and men's inmost thought are locked in their hearts. They will not say what they felt, and would not at the time; they were shy to do so; they did not wish to add to their comrade's burden by wild talk and hazardous guesses. Posterity will ask, How did the ordinary man take it? and What did he feel? Was he defiant? Was he afraid? Was he indifferent? or did he hold the English view that it would all come right in the end?

History was repeating itself, but there was always the shield of the Royal Navy, the tradition of centuries, that magic ring of steel so starved in peace, so prized in war. There was the Navy, but we had forgotten that when on a summer's day in 1908 Bleriot flew the Channel, England ceased to be an island. We knew that Rotterdam had been blasted to destruction with a death roll of twenty thousand; that the Luftwaffe was in overwhelming strength and its morale at zenith; that the enemy had mustered across the water two hundred and twenty divisions, while we could conjure up one division partially equipped; we knew that our life hung by a thread, the silver thread of the English Channel. Yet the Englishman's salvation, and at the same time his peril, was the conviction that such things could never happen at home, and it is probably fair to say that his attitude was "We shan't have to fight, but by Jingo if we do." What he was soon to learn was that we had the ships, we had the men, we had the money too, but that the equipment was almost non-existent after the losses at Dunkirk. Perhaps he guessed that he was mounting the biggest bluff in the history of war.

And what of the enemy? Why did Hitler not invade at that supreme moment when England lay defenceless, when a blow that reached the heart meant speedy death and oblivion to the greatest Empire the world has ever known? Why did he hold back? It is too early to know, but it is a fair guess that the enemy was taken unawares by his own success in France and the speed with which it was achieved. A sea-borne invasion against any form of organised resistance, however slight, is a complex operation and one that courts disaster if it is not prepared to the last detail. Knowing the German aptitude for detail and the time that must necessarily be taken in planning operations and assembling equipment, we can assume that the enemy could not have been in a position to invade before August.

A yet more interesting question is whether vital time was needlessly lost in making the invasion plans. One of the frailties of human nature is that of being too easily satisfied and soldiers are as prone as anyone else to make this error. Some of the greatest commanders in the history of war have accomplished their own ruin by failing to follow up a defeated enemy and deal the knock-out blow. The fact is that not until 19th July, five weeks after the defeat of France, did Hitler deliver his speech in the Reichstag, "A last appeal to reason."¹ Almost the concluding words of the speech were "I am the victor, speaking in the name of reason. I can see no reason why this war must go on." There is evidence that the leaders of Germany were astonished at the reception given to this

¹ On the night of 20th July, German aircraft dropped the speech in leaflet form over England. Copies were eagerly collected, and in one town they were sold at a shilling apiece for the Red Cross funds. The extract given above was printed in heavy type.

appeal by Mr. Churchill in the name of the people of Britain. It was then that they realised that there must be a show-down, and invasion plans were seriously put in hand. Five precious weeks had been lost.

A preliminary to the sea-borne invasion was a battle for the mastery of the air in daylight over the South-East of England and hence the Battle of Britain was fought. This battle was not an essential preliminary but had it been won the enemy would have been in a position to apply precision bombing to our defences in daylight unopposed, and the chances of successful invasion would have been greatly increased. The enemy must have known how small the numbers of our fighter aircraft were and threw in everything in the effort to overwhelm them, but he had not reckoned on the desperate gallantry of our pilots or on the perfection of our aircraft and their engines. The Battle of Britain was won and lost, by how narrow a margin we do not know, though we know that both pilots and aircraft fought far beyond all expected powers of endurance. All will remember the tribute paid to them by the Prime Minister, "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

Meanwhile the plans for invasion continued. On our side preparations were feverishly made to receive it, and those who read of Napoleonic times will recognise many of the measures envisaged, including the immobilisation of harbours and the evacuation of areas where heavy fighting might be expected. As the weeks elapsed the tension increased, and just before the middle of September we were warned that the crisis was imminent.

When the war history is published we shall know what date was fixed for the sea- and air-borne invasion, and most of us will expect to see that it was about the 16th of September. Records showed that for many years the period round the harvest full moon had been fine and settled. Sunday, the 15th, was fine, warm and sunny, and one day short of the full moon. That night the English climate lived up to its reputation for being the most unpredictable in the world. Wild wet weather set in, and a strong gale rising to a hurricane caused mountainous seas to run in the Channel. For several nights the barges, held storm-bound in the invasion posts, got no respite from the bombers of the Royal Air Force.

Thereafter the imminent threat of a large sea-borne invasion died away for the winter, and made only a flickering revival in the early spring of 1941, and it soon became evident that the enemy had turned his gaze eastward, for it was upon the Balkans and then upon our Russian ally that the fury of his next attack fell. This period probably marked the end of the enemy's hopes of invasion on the grand scale, but there remained the ever-present menace of a large air-borne raid and such a possibility will continue to exist until the enemy is finally overcome.

The last question so often discussed is what effective part the Home Guard would have played in repelling an enemy landing. Those who are inclined to disparage the efficiency of an ill-armed citizen force maintain that the Home Guard, lacking discipline and cohesion, could have stood no chance against the legions of Germany, whose ranks were filled with young and ruthless fighting men armed to the teeth, experienced in modern war and flushed with victory. Unquestionably they would have stood no chance in a pitched battle, but that was not the part for which they were cast. Their rôle was the local defence of their homesteads, farms and villages, and they had certain advantages to weigh in the scales. First they would have fought for their own homes, their women and children, and they would have fought to the last. Secondly, they had an intimate knowledge of their own locality, every hedge that gave cover, every sunken ditch by which a message could be carried, every knoll that afforded observation; and lastly among their ranks were many veterans who had once before fought in England's darkest hours, and held a resolute belief that she could never be defeated.

However skilfully the invasion might be prepared there was always the risk that some part of the plan would go awry and might disrupt the rest of the operation. The success of the Germans in Holland in May, 1940, was largely due to the perfect timing of their air and land forces, aided by the activities of the Fifth Column. That is the answer to the question of what the Home Guard could have done. With so many under arms there was little chance of an effective fifth column, and the fact that the Home Guard were everywhere sowed the seeds of disaster in any hostile operation calling for exact co-ordination and timing. In war the unknown is a powerful and sometimes decisive factor, and it is impossible to believe that the existence of the Home Guard, its numbers and its ubiquity, were without their influence upon the plans of the German General Staff. If at that time the Germans had doubts as to the value of irregular forces fighting in their own country, they have since been disillusioned by the fierce tenacity of the Russian guerilla bands.

Lastly there is the insidious danger of the enemy agent landed by parachute or rowing boat at night. Owing to the vigilance of the Home Guard several of these intruders were from time to time brought to account. Let the Home Guardsman, who has given so much without the reward of a scrap, ponder upon these facts and upon the truth of the old saying "they also serve who only stand and wait."

CHAPTER III

ORGANISATION OF THE HOME
GUARD

The fall of Holland and the threat of a hostile power in occupation of the Channel ports transformed the strategical situation of England overnight. On the 14th of May, 1940, Mr. Eden, then Secretary of State for War in Mr. Churchill's newly-formed Cabinet, broadcast his appeal for a citizen force to be named Local Defence Volunteers.¹

The machinery used to raise the force is of some historic interest, for it did not invoke the office of the Lords Lieutenant of Counties. This office was created in the reign of Mary and superseded the duty of the Sheriff in raising the Shire levies. Since those days the Lord Lieutenant had continuously been responsible for forces other than regular troops raised in his County and had always been empowered to raise levies in the event of apprehended invasion. Indeed it was his duty to do so. In more recent times his duties were defined by Lord Haldane's Territorial and Reserve Forces Act of 1907 under which the Lord Lieutenant was *ex officio* President of the Territorial Army Association, a body in each county responsible for raising and administering the Territorial Army. In 1940 his powers and assistance were only invoked to the extent of an invitation to co-operate with the Regional Commissioner in recommending the appointments of County leaders or Zone Organisers of the L.D.V.

What in fact happened was the despatch of a telegram dated 15th May² from the War Office to Commanders-in-Chief of Military Commands and the Commanders of the nineteen military areas into which England, Scotland and Wales were at that time divided. The telegram authorised the Area Commanders to raise the L.D.V. and defined in very general terms the organisation and conditions of service. It was repeated to the Ministry of Home Security and through that channel reached Regional Commissioners who were in many respects the civil counterpart of the Military Commanders-in-Chief. On the morning of 15th May, Sir Will Spens, the Eastern Regional Commissioner, announced that Major-General Sir Arthur Mills, a retired officer of the Indian Army, had been appointed Organiser in the East Anglian Area. The same morning the Lord Lieutenant notified the Regional Commissioner of his recommendation that Colonel W. P. Cutlack be "County Commander" for the Isle of Ely and Major W. N. Phillips for Cambridgeshire. These two officers met the Regional Commissioner at 4.30 p.m. the same day to discuss the organisation of their Counties and, as a result of

¹ Appendix A² Appendix B.

this conference and subsequent discussion with General Mills, the following gentlemen were appointed as Group Organisers:

<i>Volunteer</i>	<i>Area</i>
Col. M. C. Clayton	.. Wisbech.
Mr. A. M. Sewter	.. Whittlesey.
Mr. J. B. Levett	.. March.
Mr. G. W. Walker	.. Chatteris.
Major C. Posth	.. Ely.
Mr. Stanley Chivers	.. North-West of Cambridgeshire.
Mr. A. Hodges	.. North-East of Cambridgeshire.
Mr. W. J. Taylor	.. East and South-East of Cambridgeshire.
Capt. R. H. Parker	.. South-West of Cambridgeshire.

At this early stage the first concern of Zone Commanders was to find leaders. The population of the Isle of Ely is centred on the five towns and selection was made by Colonel Cutlack accordingly. In the County of Cambridgeshire the distribution is different. There is, with the exception of Soham, no town of any size outside Cambridge. Major Phillips, therefore, decided to make a start by dividing the County into four parts. Later the original four groups in Cambridgeshire formed into five through the split of Mr. Taylor's group whose western half was taken over by Lt.-Col. O. B. Foster, while the Isle of Ely centres grouped into two battalions, one taking the area Wisbech, Whittlesey and Thorney, the other the remainder of the Isle. The early decisions, however, stood the test of time and those first groups to a great extent preserved their identity.

The War Office telegram of 15th May had mentioned no sub-division of the L.D.V. Group, but in his first written instruction dated 16th May, General Mills laid down that the local organisation was to run parallel to that of the Police Force, the Zone, Group, District and Parish organisers of the L.D.V., corresponding to the Chief Constable, Police Superintendent, Inspector and Village constable. It is important to remember that in its earliest hours the L.D.V. was regarded as being a band of citizens with a civil status, loosely improvised, without rank, and bound together solely by the sense of urgency and peril. This was more in accordance with the age-old constitutional duty of the citizen to act in aid of the civil power rather than the later development of the organised auxiliary to the Armed Forces of the Crown.

The next War Office instruction on 18th May¹ did something to clear the air, and the L.D.V. were brought on to a military basis. They were to form part of the Armed Forces of the Crown and to be subject to military law, but there were to be "no officers or non-commissioned officers in the ordinary Army sense of these terms," and there was to be no fixed establishment. The instruction laid down that the basic unit was to be the "section of approximately

¹ Appendix C.

10 men, sections being grouped into platoons and platoons into companies." Area and Zone organisers were to appoint the company commanders, who in turn would appoint their own subordinates. This instruction allowed no place for the group organiser mentioned in the original War Office telegram, but the assumption was that he would in effect be a battalion commander, though the term "Battalion," was not in fact officially recognised in the L.D.V. until the publication of Army Council Instruction 653, dated 24th June, 1940. Such was the skeleton of the L.D.V. Now let us turn for a moment to the flesh and bones.

No sooner had Mr. Eden finished his talk on the evening of 14th May than police stations were inundated with offers of assistance. Telephone calls were almost continuous and hundreds of men visited the police stations to register their names. The police station was the obvious point for registration, not only because it was easy to find but because no Fifth Columnist stood much chance of passing through the mesh. Indeed, so universal was the response that any agent or other ill-disposed person who wished to remain inconspicuous was in an awkward dilemma for he had to choose between the questions of the police or the enquiries of his neighbours as to why he had not volunteered. At the same time appeals were made to the British Legion and all other ex-Service organisations for all old soldiers who could fire a rifle.

Mr. Eden's speech struck a chord in the hearts of thousands among the ex-Service men's organisations. To them it came as the culmination of years of preparation and fulfilled a hope that they might once more serve their country. Although in the years after 1918 many of them had said "never again," they responded almost to a man when once more their country was in danger. In the early months of the war a large number of ex-Service men, chafing at inactivity, had joined the Civil Defence Services. These experienced men were sorely needed in the new emergency, and whenever it was represented that their services were urgently required in the L.D.V. the Civil authorities were helpful in releasing them.

The burden of work which fell upon those responsible for organisation was almost overwhelming and a lasting tribute is due to them for what was accomplished in the time. Mr. Eden had described the L.D.V. as a "spare-time job," and no one can accuse them of not having made the most of their spare time in May, 1940. There were no offices other than their own business premises, there was no clerical assistance beyond the voluntary workers; indeed, a War Office telegram of 15th May laid down that "no expenditure on clerical assistance by Zone or Group organisers will be accepted by public funds." Group organisers, however, were authorised to claim 2s. 6d. per rifle for their office expenses, and this meagre sum

was to tide them over until 31st March, 1941. No authority was given at this stage for hiring or requisitioning accommodation. The financial stringency slowly relaxed, for, on 3rd June, Zone commanders were authorised to employ clerks, "but expenditure must be kept to the absolute minimum." Special thanks should be accorded to the Women's Voluntary Services who up till then had been most generous in supplying voluntary typists and other clerical assistance. It was fortunate that the need for assistance came to be recognised, belated though it was, for Zone and Group commanders were inundated with correspondence in addition to their executive duties. There was the spate of helpful suggestions inseparable from such occasions. The palm should be given to the individual who urged the claim of King's College Chapel to be put high on the demolition list on the grounds that it was a landmark, or alternatively an observation post! Whether the suggestion was of military value or not, it can at least claim to deprive our Russian allies of the credit for having originated "scorched earth."

By no means all of the correspondence showed a realisation of the sense of urgency. In one instance much time and paper were wasted over the question whether the L.D.V. might use a certain miniature range which was not required for any other purpose. There were innumerable conferences. There were hair-raising stories of Fifth Columnists, of lights in unusual places, and even of parachutists. It is not to be supposed that there was any panic; reports of this kind were natural under such circumstances, but there was at first no organised intelligence service to sift and dispose of them at source, though an improvised intelligence section was set up in Cambridge early in June. Much of the time of L.D.V. H.Q. and of the men themselves was spent in investigating these reports and in re-assuring the authorities and the country folk.

Invaluable assistance was given by the police in enrolling the L.D.V. Within a few hours they had duplicated the form setting out the questions which applicants were required to answer. These forms were checked by the police on the security side and then passed to the Home Guard commanders who selected recruits from among the applicants according to their suitability or in some cases, according to the number of rifles available. The official enrolment form (Army Form W.3066) could not be completed by the early applicants as supplies did not become available for some days.

The importance of the Borough of Cambridge appears so obvious that it seems remarkable that no L.D.V. town unit was formed for nearly a fortnight. From time immemorial Cambridge had been a centre of communication. From Horseheath runs the old Roman road over the Gogs to Cambridge and then becomes the *via Devana* to Huntingdon. A branch of Ermine Street runs into Cambridge from Wimpole, and the old Akeman Street ran north-

east from Cambridge to Ely, while just to the south the Icknield Way ran via Mildenhall and Newmarket towards London.

It is easy to be wise after the event and no doubt there were sound reasons at the time for giving priority to the country units. Major-General Willans, Commanding the 2nd London Division at that time, had operational control of the L.D.V. and when the importance of Cambridge and its lack of protection was pointed out, he authorised the formation of the Borough unit which subsequently became the 5th Battalion Home Guard. Meanwhile the Borough Police Station had been besieged by applicants eager to serve and impatiently awaiting their orders. Hearing that there were about twelve hundred names on the register, Major Phillips called a meeting at the School of Anatomy on 27th May and addressed the assembly. His announcement that he had selected Vice-Admiral W. Lake and Captain Guy Dale as Commander and Second-in-Command was received with hearty approval. As the meeting dispersed the crowd which had been shut out began to surge in and Major Phillips had to give his address all over again.

As the days went by, numbers rapidly increased and the organisation of units began to take shape. It soon became apparent that unless battalion commanders were introduced into the chain of command there would be either an undue number of companies for a Zone commander to deal with or else the size of the companies would make control impossible. On 24th June, Army Council Instruction 653 was published dealing comprehensively with the L.D.V. and introducing for the first time the appointment of battalion commanders. This was a big step forward in organisation. One of the most debatable questions was that of military rank. Army Council Instruction 924 of 15th August, 1940, had defined the position as follows:—"This is a citizen force organised on the principles of equality of service and status. There is accordingly no system of ranks though there are appointments suitably graded for the commanders of the various formations." This ruling placed the L.D.V. officers in a very uncertain position, for their only status was that of "an enrolled volunteer," and as such they were apparently subject to Military Law as private soldiers. Moreover, it was difficult to see how any organised force which officially formed part of the Armed Forces of the Crown could maintain its cohesion without some recognised system of military ranks.

On this question there was great divergence of opinion. Many members holding the "appointment" of battalion or company commander expressed a strong preference for maintaining their unofficial status. They must be pleased to have since found a champion in the senior officer who considered that those who set store by rank were the least fitted to hold it.⁵ On the other side strong pressure was brought to bear with success. In January,

⁵ Lt.-General Sir D. Brownrigg in *Unexpected*.

1941, the appointment of officers to Home Guard Commissions was approved by the War Office, and this was followed in March by approval for the introduction of Warrant and Non-commissioned ranks.¹

Whatever may have been their feelings at the time the opponents of rank would have found it increasingly difficult to state a case as the course of time went on. Up to March, 1941, the only authorised badges were the dark blue stripes of braid, resembling the Royal Air Force ranking, worn by the officers on the shoulder straps and the chevrons worn on the left arms by section or village commanders. With the introduction of the rank reforms these vanished and normal military badges took their place.

The spring of 1941 marks the close of the original citizen force and its transition to a branch of the Armed Forces of the Crown. No radical changes were made in organisation throughout the summer and autumn and the Home Guard settled down to do its best with the slender resources available, and thankful for a minimum of change. In the higher organisation it had, however, become apparent that reform was essential. There was a multiplicity of headquarters, and this led to uncertainty of direction, divided responsibility and an unjustifiable spate of paper which became in time a real burden to battalions. At times three different headquarters were corresponding with units on the same subject.

From the inception of the Home Guard it had been an accepted principle that the military authorities should be responsible for organisation and training, and from June, 1940, onwards that the Territorial Army Associations should be responsible for administration. In theory this was sound, but in practice neither body was staffed adequately for its duties. Where the professionals were unable to compete the amateurs had stepped in. Parallel to the Military Area Headquarters at Cambridge was another headquarters known as East Anglian Area North (Home Guard) under a very distinguished retired officer, Lord Loch, who had succeeded Major-General Mills on 1st July, 1940. This headquarters dealt solely with Home Guard questions, although in fact the Commander of Cambridge Area, a Brigadier, was responsible for any decisions taken. H.Q., E.A.A. (N) corresponded with the Home Guard units through Zone H.Q. At the same time Cambridge Area issued instructions to Cambridge Sub-Area and thence to the Home Guard, while the Territorial Army Association, not to be outdone in the paper chase, issued its own instructions on administration, co-ordinating with other headquarters whenever it was fortunate enough to have copies of their correspondence. The feelings of the long-suffering Battalion Commander at this state of affairs can be imagined. In November, 1941, the War Office decided upon a simplification. H.Q. East Anglian Area (North) ceased to exist as

¹ A.C.I. 298 of 1941.

from 31st December and Zone commanders ceased to have executive duties and became the advisers of the military commander on all Home Guard matters. Although the benefit from this reduction of headquarters was at once apparent, no adequate tribute can be paid to the work of Lord Loch and the two Zone commanders who had nursed the L.D.V. from its infancy and had seen it grow into an army of home defence. The wise counsel and the dominating personality of Lord Loch will never be forgotten by those who served under him. He was a link with all that was best in a fast changing world, and his death in August, 1942, at his Suffolk home was a personal bereavement to many of the old L.D.V. in Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely.

The change in the functions of Zone commanders was a relief from an intolerable burden of detailed work for which they had neither the time nor the staff and freed them to deal with the broader issues and to devote themselves to questions affecting the personal interests of those under their command. In the course of 1942 H.Q. Isle of Ely Zone became Isle of Ely Sector with operational responsibility, a new sector with similar responsibility was formed in Cambridge under Colonel W. Lake (late Commander 5th Cambs. Battalion H.G.) and the original H.Q. Cambridge Zone became Cambridgeshire Group in an advisory capacity to the Military Commander. At the end of the year Cambridge Area H.Q. closed, leaving no formation headquarters between Cambridge Sub-Area and Norfolk and Cambridge District, but to the great pleasure of the Home Guard, the Brigadier returned as a Major-General to command the District in May, 1943.

One of the most interesting developments was the expansion of the 2nd Cambs. Battalion. For some time the military authorities had cast a critical eye on the boundary between Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. This had certain tactical weaknesses, but as any adjustment involved encroaching on the territory of one county or the other, the solution was not easy. In 1942, Colonel (later Major-General) James Harter was commanding Cambridge Sub-Area. Colonel Harter had served in the Suffolk Regiment and, therefore, had a foot in each camp. At his instigation a deep salient was driven into Suffolk to include the area of Brandon and Mildenhall. Three companies of the 8th Battalion The Suffolk Home Guard under Major W. B. Wood, Lt.-Colonel H. C. Hyde-Smith and Major H. Wentworth-Smith loyally accepted this decision and came under the command of Lt.-Colonel W. J. Taylor, whose battalion then became the 2nd Cambs. and Suffolk Battalion Home Guard.

In England the parish and the county spirit are strong. It would be wrong to say that there was any animosity between the men of Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, but they were cousins rather than brothers, and sometimes distant cousins at that. Possibly the Suffolk man with his deep distrust of all new-fangled ways had come

to associate Cambridgeshire with its University town and the spirit of progress; while Cambridgeshire considered its neighbours insular and uncouth. Perhaps the explanation is a simpler one. Like all good East Anglians, they regarded each other as "them foreigners." There was little likelihood of any friction between the neighbouring Home Guard. The Cambridgeshire Regiment had for a long time formed part of the Corps of The Suffolk Regiment. Both played the same Regimental March and The Suffolk Regiment provided in peace time the Regular personnel to instruct the Cambridgeshire Regiment. Both shared the same Depôt at Bury St. Edmunds. The fusion of the two counties in the 2nd Cambs. and Suffolk Battalion was therefore a natural one and forged one more link between the two regiments.

In the Isle of Ely adjustment was also necessary, though for a different reason. The 2nd Battalion covered an area too big for efficient command and administration, and in January, 1943, the battalion was divided into two. Lt.-Colonel C. E. Cross took over command of the southern battalion vice Lt.-Colonel Posth, who resigned on account of age, after serving in this unit from the day it was raised. The northern unit became the 3rd Isle of Ely Battalion under Lt.-Colonel G. W. Walker, who had also been a Home Guardsman from the beginning.

The year 1942 also saw the formation of a new Home Guard unit. For the second time in four years Cambridge raised its own anti-aircraft troops. Of their two predecessors raised in September, 1939, one battery had already performed gallant service in the Battle of Malta. Although this new battery lacked the early associations and traditions of the Home Guard its keenness and *esprit de corps* were very marked. It had the great advantage over the infantry of the Home Guard in that on any night a solitary raider might give the gunners an opportunity to fire a shot in anger while the "poor blooming infantry" had to wait in the hope that Hitler would one day make another of his errors on the really big scale, and the longer the war continued the further their hope receded.

A milestone in the history of the Home Guard was the introduction of compulsory service early in 1942. Up till that time the Force had been on an entirely voluntary basis, and its members were justly proud of their status. There was at the time some apprehension lest compulsion might alter the whole tone of the Home Guard. It was felt by some that a force originally raised in the old yeoman tradition might deteriorate once it was diluted with conscripts as they were at first called. These fears were not justified. Compulsion brought in a large amount of fine material. Men holding responsible positions and who were already serving their country for long hours were drafted into the ranks and made excellent soldiers. There was, of course, a minority who had not

hitherto done their share, and they were caught in the mesh of National Service. Any friction that arose, and the cases were very few, was caused by the small minority and to these the example of their comrades was the best corrective.

Simultaneously, with compulsory service there was introduced the penalty for absence from parade. Offences were to be dealt with before the Civil Courts and the maximum sentence on summary conviction was imprisonment for one month or a fine not exceeding £10, or both. The result of this was remarkable not only for the small number of prosecutions but for the diversity of the sentences imposed by the different benches. Some magistrates did not hesitate to inflict imprisonment, whilst others contented themselves with a caution. There is a story that in one battalion a sweepstake was held on the probable result, but on the day of the race the magistrates disagreed. As no one had drawn "the field" the subscribers took the only possible course in repairing to the "local" to divide the proceeds. The machinery of compulsion was applied through the Ministry of Labour and National Service whose representatives were in close touch with the military and Home Guard commanders. As the maximum strength of each unit was fixed by higher authority it was a simple matter to direct recruits into the units where vacancies existed.

One of the thorniest problems in organisation was that of the 7th (Mobile) Battalion and the 8th (University Senior Training Corps) Battalion. The 8th Battalion consisted entirely of University students, while the 7th contained a large proportion. The latter battalion enjoyed the distinction of being a mobile unit and thus differed from the great majority of the Home Guard whose rôle was essentially one of local defence. The duty raised many problems of organisation, and while all units had difficulties of their own it will probably be admitted that the officer commanding the 7th Battalion had at least his full share. The 8th Battalion H.G., under command of Colonel Murray, was also the Cambridge University Senior Training Corps, containing sub-units of Artillery, Royal Armoured Corps, Infantry, Signals and Engineers. Colonel Murray, therefore, had the dual task of training the S.T.C. and maintaining a Home Guard unit ready to fight. Any Home Guard platoon commander who has embarked upon the great enterprise of transferring a man from one unit to another may reflect with joy upon the refinements of the game as played by the 7th and 8th Battalions. Their University members were seldom resident for more than a year, half of which consisted of vacations, and few, if any, knew their destination on leaving. The problems and the paper raised by this floating population can be readily imagined.

Cambridge also had its own Borough Battalion (the 5th), whose story is told elsewhere. With the presence of these three units in one town it might have been anticipated, or even hoped by the

mischievous, that there would be a revival of the immemorial jealousies between "town" and "gown." The historian dealing with the times of our rude forefathers tells us that "at the heels of the genuine student came a host of ribalds and their bearing towards the rustics of the town was in the last degree provocative." On another occasion "The Mayor going about to repress misdemeanours offered by divers young men of the University, his gown was rent and spoiled and some used lewd speeches to him." These regrettable incidents were not repeated; on the contrary, there was nothing but harmony and co-operation between the town and university element.

The 6th Cambs. Battalion Home Guard (No. 34 G.P.O. Battalion) was unlike any other Home Guard unit in the county, in that it was recruited entirely from one profession, the Post Office. It therefore presented one of those anomalies that delight the Englishman, a Civil Service under arms! Its headquarters and one company were in Cambridge, and the remainder were located in neighbouring counties. If the Commanding Officer experienced the usual difficulties which result from being out of personal touch with subordinates, at least he could not blame the lack of communications which was so harassing to other Home Guard commanders.

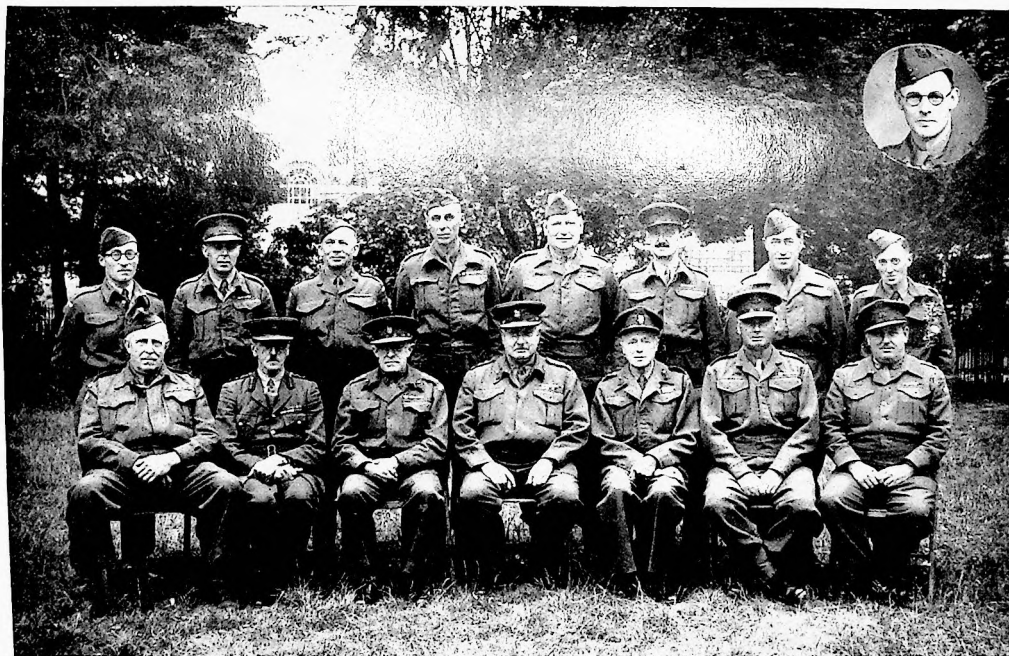
Number 2007 M.T. Company, under command of Major M. A. Dickerson, was raised early in 1943. The members were transport contractors and drivers in civil life, most of whom were already serving in Home Guard units and were transferred to form the new company. Headquarters were at Cambridge with platoons centred on Wisbech, Cambridge and Ely.

Such in outline was the organisation of the Home Guard. Commanded by men already over-worked, staffed by those who had to answer a fresh question every day, and served by a patient rank and file, the machine often creaked but never stopped. In the oil can was the lubricant of goodwill. The military authorities avoided the error of attempting to make a sealed pattern for all units, and to a large extent the local commander forged a weapon to suit local conditions.

The force had a discipline of its own which is reminiscent of another great citizen army, the Southerners of the American Civil War. On one occasion the members of the Home Guard did not see eye to eye with their local leader, and he in turn appealed to the C.O. When the C.O. arrived to straighten matters out he was heard to ask in a loud whisper, "What shall I say to them, Bert?" and the answer was "Say what you like, they'll take anything from you."

Thus it came about that the old L.D.V., originally enrolled to deal with the parachutist, became the Army for the defence of England, and by releasing the Field Force for operations overseas made their contribution to the final victory.

HOME GUARD COMMANDERS, 1943



[Photo: Stearn and Sons]

Lt.-Col. L. L. Tolley 6th Cams.	Lt.-Col. J. M. Bryan 1st Cams.	Lt.-Col. W. J. Taylor 2nd Cams. & Suffolk	Lt.-Col. R. H. Parker, M.C., D.L., 4th Cams	Lt.-Col. C. E. Cross 2nd Isle of Ely	Lt.-Col. D. Mackenzie 7th Cams.	Major M. A. Dickerson 2007 M. T. Coy.	Lt.-Col. G. W. Walker 3rd Isle of Ely
Lt.-Col. O. B. Foster, M.C. 3rd Cams.	Col. K. D. B. Murray, C.B., D.S.O., 8th Cams	Col. W. N. Phillips, D.L. Group Comd. Cambridgeshire	Col. W. P. Cutlack, C.B., T.D., D.L., Sector Comd., Isle of Ely	Col. W. Lake Sector Comd. Cambridge	Lt.-Col. M. C. Clayton, D.S.O., D.L., 1st Isle of Ely	Lt.-Col. G. F. Dale 5th Cams. <i>Inset: Major S. J. Moss, 101 Cams. A.A. Bty.</i>	

CHAPTER IV

ADMINISTRATION OF THE HOME
GUARD

"You will rejoice to hear that there will be no paper in the Home Guard." In the earliest days these words were spoken in all good faith by a very senior military officer at a conference of all Zone commanders. Why did circumstances make it impossible to fulfil that pledge?

The early conception of the L.D.V. has since been aptly described as "the gamekeepers' union." Volunteers were to be given a gun and some ammunition with which to destroy vermin and that was to be the end of the matter, but it was not long before it became apparent that the most unmilitary nation in the world was showing a marked aptitude for soldiering when it had a clear-cut object and was taught on commonsense lines. The authorities therefore saw the possibilities of an Army of Home Defence which would ultimately release the Field Army for the offensive and so the Home Guard gradually took shape as the Army which guarded the vital base of Britain.

Now administration is only another name for good housekeeping, and in this respect the Home Guard suffered for a long time from having started on the wrong foot. Few realised that an army was in the making and therefore few were looking ahead. There are many who decry all administration as "bumph" and red tape, but they forget that the soldier, whether Home Guard or Field Force, is a gentleman who wears battle dress as a temporary inconvenience; under the khaki he is a citizen of a country accustomed to the highest standard of living in the world. He is not likely to take kindly to it if he finds that bad administration causes him unnecessary discomfort. To put it in military language, his morale will suffer. With a part-time force it is not easy to build up a system of administration without making demands upon the time and energy of the officers and the position is further complicated in a force where battalions are the size of normal brigades, and are in some cases scattered over hundreds of square miles. Decentralisation must be the first principle but it means added work and responsibility for the juniors. The Home Guard ultimately achieved a creditable standard of administration, but that came much later and the story must be told from the beginning.

In June, 1940, the intention of the War Office was that Territorial Army Associations should administer the Home Guard. One of these Associations had existed in each county since 1907 and they were accustomed to administering volunteer troops, but with the

departure of the Territorial Army on the outbreak of war they all reduced their staffs and when the call came they were quite unprepared. Of the five members of the staff of the Cambridgeshire Association in 1939, the Secretary and one other had rejoined the Army, one had been discharged and only two remained. It took a considerable time to train an adequate staff to deal with the volume of work that arose, and it would have been quite impossible to clothe, equip and finance the L.D.V. in the early stages had not Zone Commanders come to the rescue.

The early issues to the L.D.V. were cash and goods. The cash was not plentiful; the initial grant of 2s. 6d. per rifle held was not likely to go far, and in June it was increased to £1 per man to cover all expenditure for an indefinite period. For the year 1941-42 the grant was fixed at 22s. per man and for 1942-43, and subsequently 30s. per man. The details of Treasury Grants are not exciting to read or write about, but there are certain points of interest in the way the money was handled. The first is that for the year 1941 nearly 30 per cent. of the grant was unexpended. The reason is that all Treasury funds are hedged about with conditions which busy men find it irksome to study. For sometime, therefore, the Home Guard never spent what they might have, and it was only when they had settled down and learned the ropes that the expenditure rose. The generosity which inspired members to put their hands in their pockets for the first few months should not be forgotten; when they considered something to be necessary to efficiency they bought it. Later, with increasing taxation and dwindling incomes, they felt less inclined to do so, and by that time they had learned what could be had for the asking. Most people would prefer not to be told that they are honest; it is among the things that are taken for granted. Yet it is a fact that with all the opportunities that existed under war conditions for laxity or fraud, "carelessness" was negligible. The cynic may say that the Home Guard were too busy to think it out; the charitable man will pay his tribute to the scrupulous standards of honesty with which the Home Guard handled their public funds.

From the beginning the Government recognised the principle of "out of pocket expenses," and members were entitled to claim their motor mileage allowances, though in fact a number never did so either because they were public-spirited or too busy, or both. Another "out of pocket" expense was subsistence allowance on a sliding scale according to the number of hours members were retained on duty. With the introduction of compulsory service in 1942 it became necessary to introduce the payment of expenses for travelling to parades, including a bicycle allowance of one half-penny a mile for those who wished to claim it. The amount of paper work was of course disproportionate to the sums involved and this was another allowance of which many did not avail themselves.

There were a number of other concessions, the most important of which was disablement allowance for those incapacitated on Home Guard duty, and another was the granting of compensation for minor personal losses, such as stolen bicycles, broken spectacles or underclothes torn on barbed wire. This allowance is typical of the needs which make themselves felt in a citizen army. It is argued by the opponents that hard cases make bad law and that these wants can well be disregarded. The other view is that enough hard cases also make bad feeling and that when the Home Guard were already giving so much they should not be out of pocket as well. From first to last the Home Guard were an unpaid force. They were compensated when they lost their normal earnings through duty or accident or were put to expense, but they were never paid for doing a duty. There is not much else of interest in the financing of the force, except to total the bill. The cost to the taxpayer of the Home Guard in this county, excluding the value of stores of all kinds, was under £3 per head per annum, or approximately one-fortieth of the cost of a regular soldier in peace time.

The task of financing the Home Guard was a comparatively simple one. All it needed was a clear head for figures, an office and some clerks. One could put a cheque in an envelope and the postman did the rest. The problem of the issue of stores was a very different affair, involving the physical handling, checking and distribution of commodities direct to villages throughout the two counties. In addition a tally of issues and receipts had to be kept.

Not the least remarkable of the achievements in those early days was the improvisation of a Cambridgeshire Zone Quartermasters' Stores under Captain H. Munns. This was formed on 28th May, 1940, at Downing Place.

Through it passed all the rifles, ammunition and equipment not only for Cambridgeshire but also to some extent for the Isle of Ely. The team consisted of Captain H. Munns, Captain W. A. Diver, Mr. C. R. M. Cannon, George Campling, "Uncle Arthur" Humberstone, Dr. Stride, Mr. Kirkup, Mr. Dewey and Mr. Widdas, known to all as "Staff." They were entirely unpaid, and did all their work in that mysterious part of the day or night known to the Home Guard as "spare time."

About 20th May, a week before this team assembled, 2,000 .303 pattern '14 rifles arrived and were issued to the police stations for safe keeping. The numbers of rifles increased slowly and by the end of July there were about 6,000 in Cambridge and 2,000 in the Isle. From early times, therefore, a high proportion of the Home Guard were armed with a rifle and a minimum of 20 rounds of ammunition. In addition there were a number of sporting guns in the hands of members; for it had been decided that shot guns and sporting cartridges were legal weapons in accordance with the Geneva Convention.

At the same time the pressing question arose as to what constituted a uniform, or, in other words, as there were no uniforms available, what legal substitute could be found. International law requires that "the uniform of irregular troops must have a fixed distinctive sign recognisable at a distance; complete military uniform is not essential." The question might have been an interesting one to debate had not the Germans settled the matter by announcing that they proposed to shoot the L.D.V. in any case; there remained then the matter of issuing some form of clothing so that the L.D.V. could recognise and not shoot each other.

In practice the minimum was a suit of civilian clothes and an armband to provide the "fixed distinctive sign," the armbands marked L.D.V. being made in the local shops. At the end of May the first "uniforms" began to arrive. A telephone message from Bury St. Edmunds caused an exodus of private cars from Cambridge and Ely to collect denim overalls and field service caps, and these were eagerly distributed. The issue of clothing was arduous but had its lighter side. At Ely issues were made throughout the night, and the next day there was a plaintive message from Whittlesey offering small sizes in exchange for large. At the same time a platoon commander wrote to complain that the caps were too small for his men. Getting no reply and fearing that he had given offence he cancelled the letter and wired that his men were too big for the caps. One feels that if international difficulties had been handled with such diplomacy the world might be a happier one to-day.

The first weapon to augment the rifles and shot guns was the Molotov Cocktail, a glass bottle which broke on impact with a tank and generated a fire. It was an effective weapon in action but an unpleasant one to store owing to the risk of accidental breakage.

The big event of July, 1940, was the arrival of 8,000,000 American rifles, of which 6,000 were allotted to Cambridgeshire and 2,000 to the Isle of Ely. These were part of a consignment of one million rifles given by the United States. Special trains were waiting to take them from the ports, and at 3 p.m. on a hot afternoon, ten lorry loads made their appearance in Cambridge. This presented the Home Guard Stores with a problem, but they were equal to the occasion. By the kindness of the Mayor of Cambridge the Corn Exchange was made available and there the Cambridgeshire rifles were dumped for the night. The next problem was a more serious one. The rifles had been thickly coated with grease inside and out in preparation for a hazardous voyage and they had to be cleaned before they were fit to be issued. Captain Munns called upon Mrs. Clark Kennedy to raise volunteers for the work, and the next morning one hundred and fifty ladies, bringing their own overalls, paraffin and rags, were at work upon the rifles. This continued for a fortnight, the peak number of helpers rising to two hundred and fifty, and by the end of July the rifles were ready for issue.

Fortunately this generous help was given before the days of clothes rationing, for many a garment must have been irretrievably ruined. Simultaneously, Colonel Cutlack had arranged for the Drill Hall in East Road to be made available, and there the two thousand rifles for the Isle of Ely were cleaned under the supervision of Mr. Bowyer, the caretaker.

The last fence to be cleared was the distribution of the rifles and the twenty rounds of ammunition to fit them. Those for the Isle were sent to battalions and thence issued to the men. In Cambridgeshire distribution from Zone Stores was in some cases to battalion H.Q. and in others direct to villages. At the same time the original 303 rifles had to be handed back for issue to the field force, and the work of exchange and obtaining signature for all these weapons was a very arduous one.

On 23rd August, 1940, a detachment of the L.D.V. from the Eastern Counties were inspected by His Majesty The King at Thetford. The dress was forage caps, denim suit and gas masks, with a rifle and 20 rounds per man. The detachment of 200 other ranks and eight officers was commanded by Major W. N. Phillips and among the officers was Vice-Admiral W. J. Lake. Major-General The Lord Loch was in attendance upon His Majesty, who addressed the parade and congratulated the men upon their smart and soldierly bearing.

It was early in September, just in time for the invasion which never came, that boots, greatcoats and cap badges began to be issued, followed shortly by anklets, steel helmets and field dressings. Clothing and equipment of course had to be given out in the order in which it came from the factories, and when the losses of material at Dunkirk are taken into account it is remarkable that so much was made available for the Home Guard at such an early date. Towards the end of October came an issue of 8,000 battledress suits, enough to clothe four out of every five then serving, and they received a great welcome from the Home Guard who said good-bye to their denim overalls with few regrets. All of these 8,000 suits passed through the Zone Stores within a week, in itself an astonishing achievement.

It was just six months after his enrolment that the Home Guardsman was able to turn out fully dressed as a soldier, but it was not until a year later that he was in possession of the web equipment. Early in November the American Lewis guns began to arrive and were taken out to battalions. If it ever occurs to a Home Guardsman to wonder why a Lewis gun packed in Detroit in August, fired perfectly at its first appearance on the village range in November, the reason is that every one of them was personally tested on arrival by the Zone Armourer, Mr. Widdas, who gave his voluntary services for many months. The high standard of the Cambridgeshire

weapons throughout the war was largely due to his skill and attention.

The story of the Zone Stores staff is a story typical of the Home Guard of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely. They sweated and swore, they borrowed and scrounged, and they delivered the goods. They slept when there was time and had meals when they remembered them. The black-coated members worked as navvies when they weren't doing the figures. There was a day when one of the team, who was a very hairy man, was given 5,000 blankets to sort out. It was a hot day and he stripped to the waist. At 9 in the evening when his job was done they filled him with beer, stood him in the corner and combed him out, and the story goes that they made a surplus blanket over the deal.

The same tales of toil and sweat could be told of all Home Guard headquarters. By the beginning of 1941 the number of items on charge had grown to a very large figure and there was no paid staff to handle them with the exception of the civil administrative assistant who had been appointed to each battalion. Moreover, by this time other administrative problems were beginning to crop up and it had become evident that the Home Guard had come to stay. The Territorial Army Association therefore decided that they must assume full responsibility for Home Guard administration. The Secretary, Major A. C. French, was recalled from the War Office at the end of March, 1941, and the work of building up a full-time administrative organisation was put in hand. The first task was to take over the Zone Stores. Every voucher was checked, every item counted to the last bootlace, and the deficiencies amounted to one mess tin. No one who knows the difficulties under which Home Guard storekeeping and issues had been carried on for nine months will grudge a word of praise to that happy band of volunteers who handled and accounted for hundreds of tons and many thousands of pounds' worth of public property and lost one mess tin.

The story of the Home Guard from April 1941 onwards, is progressively more businesslike and less romantic. The War Office had just begun to appoint Adjutants to succeed the Civil Administrative Assistants who had filled the gap during the rush times, and for a year the Adjutants of the battalions struggled alone with training and administration. During this time the demands made upon the Home Guard were increasing almost daily, and their responsibilities becoming greater. For example, in the autumn of 1941 the War Office decided, and rightly so, that a record office should be set up at the headquarters of each T.A. Association. This was designed not only to record and collate all forms of casualty but also to safeguard the interests of the individual man. Its establishment threw some additional work upon the Association, but far more upon the platoon commander who had to overhaul the original enrolment forms, check identity numbers, and in fact spend upon clerical

work a great deal of time which he could ill afford. The result in the end justified the trouble taken and showed itself in the rapidity with which claims for compensation and loss of wages were attended to.

During this period the problem of clerical assistance was at times acute, especially in the rural areas. A platoon commander who milks the cows at dawn and has to wait up till his hens choose to roost finds that paper returns soon lose their charm. In the towns a large section of the population is clerically-minded and the black-coated worker keeps more regular hours. Nevertheless, administrative duties began to bear very hard upon all, and there was little improvement until the Ministry of Labour agreed to grade Home Guard clerical employment as "vital war work." Thereafter it was possible to staff offices more adequately and the pressure eased appreciably. By the middle of 1943 the wages bill for Home Guard clerical staff in the county was nearly £20,000 a year. In April, 1942, a Quartermaster was sanctioned for each battalion. The appointment was one that needed an unusual combination of energy, tact and capacity for hard work, and was not an easy one to fill. The Quartermaster arriving late on the scene had to gather up all the loose ends which had perforce been neglected and to turn the administrative screw slowly but firmly. The fact that they did so with such success speaks volumes for their personality and their knowledge of human nature.

In the spring of 1942 it became apparent that a radical change in administrative policy was necessary. From the earliest days battalion headquarters had in most cases dealt direct with platoons or village detachments. This arrangement was adequate when operational plans were simple and administration was in the elementary stage, but as the Army grew and matters became more elaborate the battalion headquarters became overloaded and the company commanders were deprived of their responsibilities. It was therefore decided by Colonel Harter, the Commander Cambridge Sub-District, and by the Association, that battalions should re-organise so as to introduce company commanders into the administrative organisation, and this was gradually achieved. From this time there was great improvement in efficiency and a further step forward was made with the introduction of Administrative Exercises in the beginning of 1943.

It is an interesting fact that the Home Guard who had carried out their operational training with the utmost enthusiasm for two and a half years had been most reluctant to test their administration under battle conditions, nor had the military authorities given them any lead in the matter. Largely as a result of private enterprise these exercises were started, and very soon they became a most popular form of training. The provision of food and drink is a live problem; if the potatoes are hard or the meat is bad it needs no

umpire to call attention to the fact. Soon the Home Guard began to enjoy their calculations with the village shop, arranging for the Women's Voluntary Services to cook, and extracting "points" from the Local Food Executive Officers. A very great deal was learned at these exercises, and as a result of them the Home Guard were far more confident of their ability to continue in action under battle conditions.

Much might be written of the other minor problems; among them were the petrol returns, the "G" Licences, the ammunition shelters and how to site them so that they complied with the safety rules, and would also serve as the post-war chicken house. To many of these questions the Home Guard were able to see the lighter side, as for instance the occasion when someone connected with the Chapter of Ely solemnly protested at an ammunition shelter near the Close on the grounds that it was uncamouflaged. Those who have admired from a distance that great cathedral roof shining over the Fens may visualise a picture of the sublime and the ridiculous.

The fire-watching and the other many duties in conjunction with the civil authorities played a large part. Another of the problems was the provision of accommodation in a reception area. Private houses, barns, schools, were all pressed into service, and much accommodation was loaned voluntarily. In other cases requisitions were served and minor adaptations were carried out to improve the accommodation until finally there was room for indoor training in bad weather and an office and store of some sort for platoon and company commanders. These matters of quartering were not without their lighter moments. At Isleham the Home Guard platoon established their office in a loft, only to find the next day that the owner had installed a pig on the ground floor. The question soon resolved itself into moving either the pig or the office. After much correspondence it was decided that both were an essential part of the war effort, and, as in any case there was no alternative accommodation, both accepted the inevitable.

The story of the Home Guard is one of patience, adaptability and good humour, and the story of its administration by the Territorial Army Association is that of a typically British compromise. In no other country in the world could an Armed Force in war have been administered by a civil body. This curious arrangement worked because the Association had been accustomed to handling a voluntary Army, the Territorials of peace time, and because the Home Guard Commanding Officers were strongly represented at its meetings.

Administration consists not of framing policy but of executing it intelligently. The War Office framed policy and the Association carried it out with a measure of intelligence. Its strength lay in that its members came from all professions and all walks of life, and so were in touch with the ordinary man. They knew, without being



(Photo: Eastern Press Agency)

1940, "THE GAMEKEEPERS' UNION"

told, that in England, and particularly the East of England, a voluntary force can always be led and never be driven.

There was, on the whole, a very cordial co-operation between the military authorities and the Association, and this was particularly so in the case of H.Q. Cambridge Sub-Area, with whom the Association were in daily touch. The Home Guard from time to time complained that the higher commanders and staffs asked too much and did not understand them. They certainly asked a lot and the Home Guard freely gave; if they ever lacked a full understanding it would not be surprising, for never in military experience has there been a force quite like the Home Guard.

Every war produces its stories at the expense of the staff and the favourite in Cambridgeshire is that of the staff officer who was emphasising the importance of regular boot inspections in the Home Guard. On being asked when they should be held, he is alleged to have replied, "Why, on pay day of course"!

Nevertheless, the standard of administration rose month by month, and the creases were ironed out, until at the end it seemed a far cry from those early days when the man in the cloth cap and the denims on being asked why he couldn't walk straight, replied, "Well sir, the fact is the Quarters hev given me two left boots."

CHAPTER V

THEIR OWN STORY

1ST CAMBS. BATTALION

A certain 12-bore hammerless shot gun by Evans had spent most of its forty-five years in Cambridge or in Cambridgeshire. A few years in West Suffolk, two in Bucks., a few months on holidays in Northumberland or on the East Anglian coast were the only exceptions. It was a heavy weapon with Whitworth barrels, taking 2½ in. brass "Perfect" cases. And now, in late April and early May in that year of Grace 1940, the old gun found itself a focus of unusual activity. For its owner, not unaware of what his decision implied, had made up his mind that if fighting drew near, he was turning out to join in repelling the invader, at least until turned back by troops or police on the spot. To this end then two cartridge belts were bought and joined together, forming a well-filled and well-greased bandolier, while three men, a gardener, a church verger and the owner of the gun, spent many hours in charging the powerful brass cartridges with a load more lethal than they had ever yet carried.

Nor was this all; there was the .45 ammunition that was "made" illegally but with tolerable effectiveness, in the same amateur arsenal. There was the breech-loading punt gun of 1 in. calibre, the £20 spent in cartridges and their conversion to A.A., anti-tank and anti-personnel loads. The reader may smile at all this, but a steel ball (ex ball-race) 1 in. in diameter with 14 drs. of powder behind it; falls at least within the category "S.A.P." And 26 bullets, .360 in. calibre nicely patterned at a high velocity were calculated to be a considerable danger to low-flying aircraft at least.

But in the midst of all this there arrived the 14th of May, and 9 p.m. and Mr. Eden's broadcast for volunteers for "this new corps." Surely enough while the broadcast was still proceeding there was the police constable sitting at a table in the station, with pens and ink and a pile of typed *pro formas*. "You ought to have been doing this since Munich," said an Austrian domestic, but at any rate, up and down over the length and breadth of the land, tens and hundreds of thousands were over the start line like a shot. Not all, not many, had arms of any kind; still fewer were there who had much conception of rallying with whatever weapons or kit they themselves could find or provide. They came like the merchants and farmers to Haile Selassie in September, 1935, with empty hands clamouring for arms and war gear; unlike their forefathers of the Saxon "Fierd," unlike feudal tenants, unlike the Elizabethans, unlike nineteenth-century yeomanry, they came empty handed and very vociferous in their clamour—but, thank God, they came.

Then followed vetting, vetting, vetting of applicants in schools and public buildings, by a little army of tired and harassed volunteers. A few bundles of denim overalls, a number of L.D.V. armlets, some caps, a smattering of 1917 rifles, 10 rounds per rifle of the precious .303. Guarding of bridges, guarding of armouries, manning of road blocks, turning out on "Red." Choice of leaders for the seven-men unit, training of messengers, training of those without previous service. The rape of 100 steel helmets from Civil Defence, the church collection for boots for those in shoes (including the petition from one volunteer for boots "with specially soft uppers"). And scraps of conversation from those days. "Can I have a rifle yet?"—"I'm afraid not, your rifle is coming." "Humm, so's Jerry," or "Yes, the time's getting near for his mad attempt," or more significantly, from a non-Cambridgeshire Zone commander, "Do you think the Home Guard will fight?" And on this latter, a third party's comment, "It's all up anyway, if they won't." The reply then was "It hadn't occurred to me that they wouldn't. I should think they'll go fighting mad, and anyway they'll certainly follow a lead."

As to action there are some Home Guards who will not forget the night on which East Road was bombed, when, admittedly a long way from the town, a contingent in the fields saw three hostile

bombers brought down within fifteen minutes. Another recalls how at the sight of a smoking J.U. from his garden one afternoon, and the parachutes drifting in his direction, he got out the pocket .38 he at that time carried everywhere, only to be baffled by a shifting wind which deposited one at least of the hostile crew upon the roof of a "Special's" private dwelling-house!

Invasion did not come in 1940, nor in 1941, and in a multitude of important details the Home Guard was not ready. But in one respect ready it was—the spirit was there in full measure—up and down the English coastline and "shires" and not least in the 1st Cambridgeshire Battalion.

The battalion took its rise from a Group, of which the organiser was Major J. S. Chivers. Within this group the "East District" was organised by J. M. Bryan, who had commanded the battalion from its formation, and the "West District" by F. H. Jeeps, M.C., who commanded D Company from August, 1942. Part II Orders of the battalion, Serial No. 1, dated 1st October, 1941, record the following appointments, which, of course, had then been effective for more than a year:—

Major J. M. Bryan	..	..	Lt.-Colonel Commanding Batt.
Frank Leonard Engledow, C.M.G.	..	..	Major, 2nd in Command.
Francis Benjamin Brooke, M.C.	..	..	Major, O.C. Company.
John Stanley Chivers	..	..	" " "
John Henry Langton, D.S.O.	..	..	" " "
Angus Kidman Bird	..	..	Capt., 2nd in Command of Coy.
Lionel Selwyn Maurice	..	..	" " "
D'Arcy Addy	..	..	Lt., Platoon Commander.
Ferdinand Churchill Baverster	..	..	" " "
Ernest Charles Braysher	..	..	" " "
Francis George Brown	..	..	" " "
Stephen Oswald Chivers	..	..	" " "
William Huble Druce, D.C.M.	..	..	" " "
William John Easy	..	..	" " "
Albert Edward Fletcher	..	..	" " "
Richard Gane	..	..	" " "
Hugh Thomas Graves	..	..	" " "
John Godfrey Inglis	..	..	" " "
Cyril George Littlewood	..	..	" " "
Berry Tibbitt Norman	..	..	" " "
Cyril Smith	..	..	" " "
James Waters	..	..	" " "
William Dobson Womersley, T.D.	..	..	" " "
Joseph Gothard	..	..	" " "
Eric James Walkling	..	..	" " "
Robert Dwyer-Joyce	..	..	To be Major (Battalion M.O.).

Hubert Thomas Frocock ..	..	To be 2nd Lt.
Royal Harvey .. .. .	..	" " "
Edward Howard .. .. .	..	" " "
Walter William Messenger ..	..	To be Lt.
Francis Algernon Pearson ..	..	" 2nd Lt.
Douglas Howard Stevenson ..	..	" "
And promoted Capt., Lt. D'Arcy Addy.		

Capt. H. O. Langdon, Suffolk Regiment (who became Quartermaster on the appointment of a separate Adjutant in Capt. J. G. Amps, Essex Regiment, early 1943), was by the date of this first Part II order, established as Adjutant and Quartermaster.

It is to be noted that Major J. S. Chivers was 2nd in Command of the battalion between August, 1940, and January, 1941, being succeeded by Major Engledow, C.M.G., and taking command of C Company.

The following tells briefly the story of the company commands:—

A Company. Formed August, 1940.

Aug. 1940 to Mar. 1941 ..	Major H. N. Richardson, M.M.
Mar. 1941 to Jan. 1942 ..	Major J. N. Langton, D.S.O.
Jan. 1942	Major H. N. Richardson, M.M.

B Company. Formed August, 1940.

Aug. 1940	Major F. B. Brooke, M.C.
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C Company. Formed February, 1941.

Feb. 1941 to Apr. 1943 ..	Major J. S. Chivers.
Apr. 1943	Major H. Payne, M.C., T.D.

D Company. Formed March, 1942.

Mar. 1942 to Aug. 1942...	Major W. H. Druce, D.C.M.
Aug. 1942	Major F. H. Jeeps, M.C.

C Company included a Factory platoon, and a platoon recruited from A.R.P. personnel, the latter a noteworthy achievement by Lt. Unwin, its commander. The changeover to effective fighting men on the part of Civil Defence personnel, the moment that enemy action could best so be countered, is a conception particularly calculated to baffle an intending invader, and implies that those training in this way for an alternative rôle were prepared to make more than an ordinary war effort.

Time and space available only admit of the briefest indication of the story of the battalion up to date. It may well be that the real tests of progress and efficiency still lie in the future, after four years of war. The method chosen for this bare indication is that of extract, much worth recording being necessarily omitted, but

enough included it is hoped to provide the reader with a definite and not inaccurate picture.

Pte. H. F. Barton (No. 2 Platoon) of Fen Road, Milton, was in the summer of 1943 presented by the Commanding Officer with a Certificate signed by the Chief of the General Staff to the Commander in Chief, Home Forces, dated 11th June, 1943. "Your name has been brought to the notice of the Commander in Chief, Home Forces. I am authorised by him to signify by the award to you of this Certificate his approval of the great services which you have rendered." This award had followed upon the crashing of a British aircraft one night in November, 1942, upon a field in the vicinity of Lovell Road, Cambridge. Pte. Barton had shown skill and courage in the extrication from the burning wreckage of the one member of the crew who remained alive. Only Home Guards (and a police constable) had at that time reached the spot. The unfortunate survivor of the aeroplane's crew was in a terrible condition, and we believe succumbed to his injuries in hospital.

The Commander of Cambridge Sub-District having witnessed the inter-Battalion Battle Platoon Competition in the summer of 1943, expressed himself in terms of very strong appreciation of the great keenness and skill of every team which took part; that of A Company, 1st Battalion, was successful in attaining to the third place.

In April, 1943, the 1st Battalion was grouped within the Cambridge Borough Sector, commanded by Colonel Lake.

From time to time since its formation the 1st Battalion has been in receipt of remarkable orders and messages from within and without. There was the lady who wrote to a certain officer concerning the Home Guard "because you are the head one of them." This writer complained that she had seen Tom Jones going with a gun to shoot rabbits, and that not only he, but Dick Robinson as well, in the same road, ought to be shooting Germans rather than rabbits. There was the farmer who wrote resigning from the Home Guard because it was a voluntary body, and now that he had been ordered to plough up another piece of grassland, he proposed forthwith to resign from all voluntary bodies. There was the platoon commander who had "no actual key men" but a total population of so many, "also a vicar and one postman."

Home Guards, even with comparatively recent regular service, have been known to do foolish things. In 1940, while the change-over from .303 to .300 rifles was in progress, a despairing parish organiser found mixed bandoliers on an operational post; .300 had been issued without clips, and disliking the loose rounds, regardless of the fact that British clips will not fit the American charger guides, the men of this post had filled many such clips with .300 rounds and mixed them up nicely, in the same bandoliers, among the British, .303 clips. Had those men had occasion to fire "rapid" in the dark-

their language, one imagines, would have become more explosive than their rifles.

Nor has the Regular Army in its relation to the Home Guard been at all times guiltless of folly. Upon a never-to-be-forgotten week-end in September, 1940, a certain large building was found by a Home Guard platoon commander to be brilliantly lighted in every window at an hour well past black-out. The officer in charge had been ordered to "Stand to," and having hitherto dispensed with a black-out by the expedient of a convenient working programme, had now elected to solve the dilemma created for him by the national emergency, by the simple process of switching on all lights "regardless." Shouts and bangs on the door having little effect upon the gentleman (whose rank was decidedly above that of platoon commander), resort to the threat of shooting the lights out eventually had the desired effect. Whether this establishment was then in a position to deal effectively with incoming telephone messages is a matter that does not concern the Home Guard.

Once in the earlier days of exercises, a young Regular "hostile" subaltern ran into a Home Guard ambush with his carrier. Halted by an obstruction, these troops stood about nonplussed, and after having thus exposed themselves to a withering fire at close range for some considerable time, were more than a little truculent when informed of their recent decease. "I don't see these weapons" objected the subaltern, and continued to stand in the road and argue, but not for very long. Patience exhausted, a brawny Home Guard soon had him by the scruff of the neck, and swinging him over to some inviting blackberry bushes, thrust his nose into the foliage, and bade him look his fill. We are left to conclude that the muzzle of the Lewis gun was sufficiently convincing to clinch matters.

Everybody knows that a certain amount of talking in the ranks does go on, and the wise commander realises that it is sometimes very useful. But on parade under the auspices of the War Office H.G. Travelling Wing, a certain subaltern was not a little entertained by his neighbour in the ranks, who was a corporal. This latter was dispensing orders and advice right and left, and nineteen to the dozen, but on the platoon moving off "at five paces between men" was checked by one of the T.W. staff for keeping about two paces instead of five. This admonition was repeated several times without the slightest effect upon the distance maintained by the corporal. "*Five paces, corporal*" and "*Five Paces, corporal,*" having no effect whatever as the platoon passed beyond earshot of the instructor. That distance safely reached, however, and round turned the corporal, speaking accusingly, and pointing with his finger, "*Five paces,*" he kept ordering the lieutenant. "*Five paces between men, five paces,*" until getting no response but a steady maintenance of the regulation distance, he tired of looking over his

shoulder and addressed his next instructions to the sergeant in front of him.

* * * * *

In conclusion, it should be recorded that Lt.-Colonel Bryan has always been at great pains to keep his battalion well supplied with information. Carefully drawn up instructions, based upon new developments in training methods, or on those modifications of the Home Guard rôle brought about by the course of the War, have constantly been prepared and issued, in addition to the official documents. The C.O. has, moreover, frequently visited and addressed both companies and platoons.

The personnel of the battalion is in the main rural in character, and in some villages it has been especially hard to find men who have time or capacity for the necessary administrative and "Q" work. Returns have often been late and incomplete, and Home Guard work, on these sides, is hard work indeed in the country. There is a feeling that the grant to the Home Guard of a larger permanent staff per battalion would have made a considerable difference in smooth running and efficiency.

Somehow by the effort of many, from commanding officer downwards, a very fine body of men has been maintained in readiness to fight. The German General Staff may have some inkling of our deficiencies, indeed, but does not the course of the war up to now suggest plainly that these gentlemen have also a wholesome respect for our strength?

2ND CAMBS. AND SUFFOLK BATTALION

On the 15th May 1940, Major W. N. Phillips, Chairman of the British Legion in Cambridgeshire, arrived at Mr. W. J. Taylor's house and said he had received instructions to form a number of Home Guard Groups. He produced a map on which he had roughly split the rural parts of the county into four, each radiating from Cambridge. Major Phillips having explained the general plan left the house, saying "You know as much about it as I do. It's up to you to find your subordinates."

The instructions were perfectly clear, but it's a queer job raising a volunteer force from scratch when you realise how little experience you have to build on and how much you would give to know more. Two years later Mr. Taylor on being asked for his reactions replied, "All I can remember is that I went into a huddle with my master and she drew some lines on the map." "My master" seems to have followed the example of Julius Caesar who divided Gaul into three parts, for the next we know was that Mr. Taylor chose Capt. T. T. Taylor and Mr. R. Thompson as Sub-Group commanders,

whilst Colonel Foster, an old Regular, was asked to command a third Group on the following day. Colonel Foster and Mr. Thompson produced a list of their Village commanders in the course of the next few days, and Capt. Taylor gave his list in the same night.

The Group, having now been split into three Sub-Groups, naturally required clerical assistance, and Miss Gower, at that time employed in Mr. Taylor's professional office, assumed the duties of chief clerk. Working late in the evening on one occasion in the early days, Miss Gower heard loud bangings at the front door of the solicitors' office. On going down to investigate, she was confronted with a perspiring driver with a lorry load of Molotov Cocktails, who asked her to help him get them off the lorry as soon as possible and put them inside. Having enough delicate matters on her hands already she sent him on his way to the C.O.'s private house, "Homebush," where they joined the rest of the amateur arsenal.

Rifles, ammunition and equipment had by this time begun to arrive in varying quantities, and the C.O.'s garage was turned into a Quartermaster's Stores to receive them, the chauffeur, Mr. Robinson, acting as Quartermaster, with Mrs. Taylor's assistance. There was very little method in checking anything. Every time anything was checked, it was always found to be short, but nobody seemed to mind. The great thing was to get the arms and equipment out to the companies in the quickest possible time.

The first member of the staff to come from outside the C.O.'s own employees was Mr. Hamshaw, who subsequently controlled the quartermaster's department till November, 1943. At first all the work relating to the Group was carried on in Messrs. Taylor's office, or at the C.O.'s house, but in August, 1940, "The Chestnuts" was occupied by the Quartermaster, Miss Gower, and a small staff. These offices were subsequently taken over in August, 1942, and the headquarters were then moved.

In May, 1940, and for some considerable time afterwards, nobody seemed to know what spending rights the Local Defence Volunteers possessed, or even were entitled to. They therefore scrounged everything they could lay their hands on, sometimes with good feeling and sometimes with bad, but it seemed to work. The first uniforms which were issued were denim overalls, but battle dress followed in the autumn of 1940. With the advent of proper uniforms came more arms and equipment, until nearly 100 per cent. of the men had rifles. Goodness knows why 100 per cent., but perhaps the adjoining battalions suffered, as none of them seemed to have this number.

The battalion at this time was almost 1,000 strong, but as they increased the number of rifles did not, and the 100 per cent. got less and less, amongst other reasons because Colonel Foster on forming the 3rd Battalion took over two of our original three companies which were fully armed with rifles, and this battalion

took over another area which perhaps had been the chief sufferer when the original battalion got its 100 per cent. In addition, when the Suffolk Companies came over they were very badly armed with rifles.

There were five major changes in the battalion area and one company only, A, under Major Taylor, formed part of the original battalion, and the area of that has altered three times. It is believed to be the only battalion of Home Guard stretching over two counties, and with the name of two counties in its title. The powers-that-be in Suffolk said that such an arrangement was impossible—Suffolk men would not wear another county badge. But they did—perfectly happily. The battalion area stretched from well north of Brandon in Suffolk to Brinkley in Cambridgeshire, and covers an area of over 400 square miles. Higher Command repeatedly threatened to split the battalion again but were always up against the difficulty of forming a second H.Q. staff, with H.Q. and specialist officers. Of the seven existing companies, three are in Suffolk, and all these three companies and their individual platoons have shown the greatest loyalty throughout.

For a considerable time no organised training was carried out except through the initiative of the village commanders. As these were old ex-Service men of all arms of the service, training was extremely varied and primitive. Arms drill formed the basis of most of the training, whilst a few villages indulged in a little patrolling. The threat of invasion, however, kept a very real incentive to become an efficient marksman, in so far as it was possible to do so without being allowed any ammunition. This threat of invasion was responsible for many amusing incidents, two of which should be recorded.

The first concerned the stalwarts of Cheveley, who used to block the road running through the village every night with an enormous tree trunk. Now, this tree trunk was very heavy, and took a lot of putting into place. One evening, however, there were only a few L.D.V. to fulfil this arduous duty. The L.D.V. were not to be outdone; they meant that tree trunk to go across the road, and they had nearly got it into place when one of them slipped up, with the result that the tree trunk fell on the top of all of them, and was too heavy for any of them either to move or to extricate themselves. At last someone came along, and was quickly dispatched to bring all the wardens to the rescue. The co-operation between the wardens and the L.D.V. at Cheveley being excellent, the tree trunk was soon got into position across the road, and the L.D.V. extricated and triumphant.

The other concerns the C.O. and Mr. Bailey of Dullingham. In July, 1940, the chief worries of the L.D.V. were spies and lights at night. Reports came in that red, green, yellow and other types of light were being shown. Probably they were all quite innocent

Air Force lights, but as there was not the closest liaison between the Air Force and the Army no real information was obtainable. Mr. Bailey who was one of those delicate officers of the L.D.V. weighing something between 22 and 23 stone, and whose lower chest measurement was 57 in., conceived the idea of locating some of the lights with fixed rifles, one to be worked from Dullingham and one from close to Newmarket.

Eventually they decided on a spot, and on investigation it turned out to be the Devil's Ditch between Camois Hall, Woodditton and Stetchworth. The mound of the Devil's Ditch at this spot is some 22 ft. high from the level of the ground, and considerably more to the bottom of the Ditch. In conjunction with two Regular Army officers stationed in the neighbourhood, it was decided to lie out the following night in order to catch the spies who were putting up the lights. The Army officers took one point in the Ditch and Mr. Bailey, the C.O., and young Moore of Dullingham, took another. They were armed with every conceivable weapon apart from rifles, including strong ropes, and the C.O., Bailey and Moore, made themselves as comfortable as they could in the bushes near the top of the slope. Anybody walking along the top would have been instantly tripped up and captured. There was to be no talking and no movement whatever, and they were to stay there until 4 o'clock in the morning. At about 2 o'clock, however, Mr. Bailey got restless, and in turning over, missed his footing, and he, his equipment, ropes, and everything else, rolled over and over until he landed at the bottom of the Ditch! Bailey was a good soldier. He did not scream, he just lay perfectly still, murmuring "I'm all right." And there he stayed until 4 o'clock in the morning. Nobody came along the Devil's Ditch, and so the ropes which Bailey had pulled with him to the bottom of the Ditch were not required except to pull him out. And there were no lights either.

The first time the battalion was paraded as such was in September, 1940. Some 800 of the battalion were formed up behind Egerton House, Newmarket, and after General Osborne had inspected the parade, he addressed the officers and men on the rôle he expected them to play when invasion came. The L.D.V. from Newmarket attended this parade, though at that time they were only attached to this battalion. They were under another battalion commander in Suffolk from whom they were entirely detached—an extraordinary state of affairs due in a great measure to the irregular shape of the county boundary of Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. So for a considerable time the ridiculous position of the Newmarket company being included in the Suffolk Command went on. It was not until February, 1942, when General Anderson came to command, that this was put right, on the recommendation of the Colonel who at that time commanded Cambridge Sub-Area.

The next time the battalion paraded as such was for the late

Lord Lieutenant, Mr. C. R. W. Adeane, on 1st March, 1942. On this occasion the battalion, composed of some 1,000 officers and men, were paraded on The Severalls, Newmarket, and, after the inspection, the Lord Lieutenant addressed the parade through a loud-speaker. The battalion again paraded in the summer of 1943, on The Severalls, before Capt. Briscoe, who had succeeded Mr. Adeane as Lord Lieutenant. All who witnessed this parade, and had seen the former ones, were immensely struck with the improvement shown.

The spring and summer of 1941 saw some attempts made at individual and collective training throughout the battalion. Lt.-Colonel Francis who then commanded C Company, organised a bomb-throwing competition, which aroused considerable interest in all his villages. This was quickly copied by other Companies, and ended in a Battalion Competition, the final of which was run off at Newmarket, and was won by the Quy platoon. Lt.-Colonel Francis also organised a combined Civil and Military Exercise in the autumn of 1941, in the neighbourhood of Fen Ditton and Horningsea. This was, it is believed, the first exercise of its kind in the county, perhaps in the country, and very many useful lessons were learned. It also formed the basis on which many subsequent schemes were laid on afterwards.

The first big exercise in which the battalion took part involved the villages of Soham, Isleham, Kennett, Chippenham, Fordham, Nailwell and Wicken. It must stand out as a very remarkable achievement for the L.D.V. of the above-named villages. The opposing forces elected to debus between Fordham and Soham, which gave our men a real chance to show their worth. This they quickly did, and acquitted themselves so well that most of the opposing personnel were taken prisoner, and nearly all the hostile transport captured as well. There was, however, just a little trouble at Isleham, because the men at that village forgot that it was not a real battle! During this exercise messages poured in all night at H.Q., which only consisted of the C.O., Mrs. Taylor, and the indefatigable Miss Gower, at the C.O.'s house, and in the morning they were all "dead beat," as anybody with any military knowledge can readily understand, since there were no signals or intelligence personnel to help them.

The next big exercise took place in December, 1941. After the previous exercise battalion H.Q. staff began to be trained. Many of them were W.V.S. employed to take telephone messages. This was the forerunner of the ladies' signals section, which became so efficient that in 1943 it was quite capable of competing with A.T.S. personnel. There was also an intelligence section, who worked out the order of battle on the maps, and kept "I. Logs." Mrs. Taylor, a very efficient "Minister of the Interior," carried out her duties

with such remarkable success that she slept 32 people in her house, and gave breakfast to 46 Home Guard in the morning.

One rather amusing incident happened during this exercise. A very smart Regular officer riding a motor-cycle was stopped by a corporal of the H.G. near Newmarket station, at which the officer became very indignant. "I am sorry, sir," said the corporal, "but you are riding a motor-cycle with enemy markings; you must come to Company H.Q." Some 24 hours afterwards the same officer was returning along the same road after convincing H.Q. that he had nothing whatever to do with the exercise, when he was stopped again by the same corporal, and this time in answer to the corporal's query, positively hissed, "Now, don't start that — romance all over again; I've already lost 24 hours of my leave!"

Many valuable lessons were learned from the exercises, so much so that by the next exercise, which was "N.W." there existed a first-rate Battle H.Q. in the Jockey Club at Newmarket, with the ladies' signals section functioning with a switchboard and three lines, a battle room, liaison and D.R. rooms, intelligence room, rest rooms, relief rooms, visitors' rooms—in fact, the H.Q. was completely supplied for every eventuality. Mr. Birkenshaw was responsible for the intelligence section, which he had organised with extreme skill and efficiency, and besides doing "intelligence" he was of great help to the battalion in many ways.

The ladies' signals at Battalion H.Q. and in several of the companies have been an outstanding success, although it took years to get going properly. Mr. G. H. F. Smith, as the Signals Officer, and Miss D. F. Smith as the O.C. ladies, have thrown their heart and soul into the job. Nor must the pigeon service be overlooked. The battalion was fortunate in being able to call upon Lt. J. L. Jarvis, who had experience of pigeons in the last war, and he has made a most efficient pigeons officer. One of the easy things in the battalion, from the headquarters point of view, has been the medical services. Dr. Gilbert Gray took charge directly authority was given to organise them, and he has had the fortune or the good judgment to persuade all the doctors in the battalion area to "play" as company medical officers, and they have all done excellent work.

The choice of officers is probably one of the greatest difficulties for the Home Guard commander, and this is especially so in the rural areas, where the choice is quite often restricted to one! It would be almost as difficult to define the qualifications required for a good company or platoon commander. Ex-Army officers are not always the best. Others who now hold the rank with no previous knowledge have been outstanding successes. Personal magnetism and the power of leadership, sympathy and ability to handle men, go a long way to produce what is required. The same remarks apply equally to the N.C.O.s. The Home Guard differs in another essential from the Regular Army. Whereas in the Regular Army,

orders are orders, in the Home Guard it is often a case of compromise, and "give and take" supersedes strict discipline. The C.O. was quick to realise that this spirit could be inculcated, and become one of the main ties which would bind a Home Guard battalion together. With this end in view, in 1940 he organised a conference, preceded by a dinner, three times a year, for all the officers. These parties, or "conferences" which have been held regularly ever since, were a great success, and many distinguished guests have attended them.

The Doric Cinema, at Newmarket, was kindly put at our disposal on Sundays throughout the winter of 1941-42, and the training films which were shown proved very attractive. The real training of the battalion, however, came with the arrival of the Adjutant, Capt. R. J. Pizzey, of the Cambridgeshire Regiment, on 21st July, 1941. Capt. Pizzey soon found that his new appointment meant a deal of hard work, but being of an energetic nature, and brim full of enthusiasm, he soon began to sort things out. He and the battalion had the good fortune of having Lt.-Colonel Francis as 2nd in Command and Training Officer. Although he had commanded a cavalry regiment in the Regular Army and had been a Cavalry School instructor he lightly cast aside all the traditions of Poona '03 and applied his abilities and knowledge to study the problems of the Home Guard with wonderful results.

Of all those who gave their help and assistance, Sergt. Jaggard, the P.S.I., stands out for a special word of praise. Although a sick man he fought against his disease and gave his very best to the battalion for over three years, until finally his disease got the better of him and he had to give in.

Perhaps the outstanding features of the training were the Summer Camps at Moulton Paddocks in 1942, and again at — Farm, Balsham, in 1943. The programme for the 1942 camp was far less ambitious than that of the 1943, when battle inoculation and field firing with live ammunition was included. It should be put on record that the ladies' signals and battalion H.Q. cooks also underwent battle inoculation. It would be impossible to mention the names of all who helped with these camps. At Moulton Paddocks a camp was shared with 6th Cambs. Home Guard, and to its excellent Adjutant, Capt. James, a debt of gratitude is owed for all the many things he did for the comfort of this battalion. At — Farm in 1943 a permanent staff was formed of about 30 officers and men from the battalion, who gave up all their leisure time on Saturdays and Sundays during June and July to come and help us, and here, as well as Mr. Birkenshaw, mention should be made of Mr. Pannell, Lt. Tufts and Sergt. Wormald, for their great assistance and also to Lt. Uttley, the Gas Officer. Nor must Mr. F. B. Taylor be forgotten—he allowed the battalion to go over his land "willy nilly," and make the camp in one of his meadows. His brother, Sidney,

was untiring in the work of administration. One cannot leave the subject of the camp without expressing great admiration of the efforts of those wonderful women of the W.V.S. who came out each week to assist and supervise the cooking of all the food under the direction of Mrs. Tharp, or Major Kent and his Chippenham Platoon, and the boys of the Army Cadet Force.

A great stimulus to training was given by the courses arranged for the officers of the battalion, which were held in November and December of 1942, and again in March, 1943, when a large number of officers attended. The weekly courses (full six days) too, for the N.C.O.s were held at Newmarket in January and February, 1943, and attended by 145 N.C.O.s, including a few from 3rd and 6th Cambs. Home Guard. The courses for the N.C.O.s were chiefly concerned with weapon training, the idea being to send back the N.C.O.s as capable instructors in the weapons with which the Home Guard were then armed, whereas the officers' courses were purely tactical ones.

Administration is one of the great problems of the Home Guard, but it was not until 1942 that the battalion got an administrative officer. Previous to this, the Adjutant combined both duties. In 1942 Capt. Pizzey worked out a scheme for organising administrative exercises throughout the battalion area. These were such an unqualified success that Eastern Command asked whether the C.O. would let Capt. Pizzey lecture to the quartermasters of Eastern Command. Subsequently the lecture was printed by the T.A.A., and circulated throughout the units of Eastern Command.

The liaison with the Civil Defence throughout the battalion area has always been excellent, particularly at Newmarket. Their organisation is good, and they all carry out their duties in a most conscientious way. The village policeman is perhaps outstanding. Before 1939 probably few people had any intimate knowledge of the activities of the rural police, but these years of war have taught us what a really efficient force they are, and their knowledge of the countryside and those who inhabit it seems boundless. And, like the Navy, they are completely without advertisement.

Perhaps one of the many functions which has helped to cement all the military and civil services together in the 400 odd square miles of England in which the battalion works and has its being was the production of the play "Newmarket." The C.O., Lt.-Colonel Francis and Capt. Pizzey, were invited in the spring of 1943 to see a play called "Extown," which was shown in Cambridge. Lt.-Colonel Francis was so impressed that he tried to get the cast to come over and give "Extown" at the Doric Cinema, Newmarket, for the benefit of all the villages in the battalion area. There were apparently many reasons why this could not be done, so the battalion produced it themselves and called it "Newmarket," in conjunction with Capt. H. R. King and the rest of the Civil Defence services at

Newmarket. And it certainly redounds to the credit of all concerned that Major-General Griffin, who was responsible for its production in Cambridge, and who saw it again in Newmarket, observed that it was an even better show than that which he had produced himself at Cambridge.

This chapter of events deals with the battalion as a whole, and the writer has found it impossible to extend it so as to give an account of the doings of each company, of which there are seven in all, or of the individual platoons, of which there are now 32. Some officers turn out a better show than others, but the difficulties of some of the latter are colossal, and their patience and loyalty well deserve a much better reward than they can ever get. The battalion is so big (a full Army brigade), that the companies themselves often have to use their discretion on really major problems, and do so with excellent judgment. The battalion has only been able to function because of the help given by companies, and it is regretted that each company is not in a position to write its own story in this book.

And what of the future? History may laugh at us, as we certainly have laughed at ourselves; but does it matter? We thought the Old Country wanted us, and we were there, and that is our reward. We of the Home Guard know full well that in 1940 and 1941 we were the biggest bluff ever, and Hitler dared not call it!

3RD CAMBS. BATTALION

The response to Mr. Anthony Eden's broadcast for volunteers on 14th May, 1940, was as enthusiastic in the area now covered by the 3rd Battalion as in any part of England. In a district which has in times gone by raised followers for Boadicea and Hereward the Wake, it was only to be expected that the response to an appeal for volunteers should be immediate and enthusiastic. Indeed, enthusiasm was the keynote of the earliest days of the old L.D.V. and some of the preparations would have bewildered Hitler's hordes had they ventured into this part of East Anglia, but more perhaps because it would seem incredible that such innocent looking obstacles as old wagons, harrows, cars and scrap iron could conceal high explosives and secret devices. But behind these hastily improvised barricades were resolute men, although their resolutions were reinforced by nothing more formidable than shot guns, pitchforks and cudgons.

What a vast difference is apparent as we write! Week by week N.C.O.s and men present themselves for the proficiency tests in a range of subjects which at least equal those required for the Regular Army. Men who once discussed the weather and crops over their evening pint, now talk of the respective merits of spigot mortars and anti-tank mines, and regard their fields not from the point of

view of crops but of cover and dead ground. Some of the work of the battalion cannot be revealed until the War is over, but it would be safe and fair to say that on one occasion at least prompt action closed one source of information to enemy bombers. Training has been intensive and exercises have been carried out under active service conditions from time to time. One platoon still remember an incident when they managed to convince—not without casualties—a member of the Regular Commandos that they were really friends! On another occasion an enemy strongpoint was surrounded by men of the 3rd, who resisted valiantly, until at dawn they sent an emissary inviting us to wipe them out as they wanted to pack up their Lewis gun and go home.

Originally the Local Defence Volunteers, soon to be renamed the Home Guard, were raised in Zones, Groups and Districts. The 2nd Cambridge Group was quickly absorbed into the 3rd Cambs. Group. Very soon afterwards this group was divided into the 2nd and 3rd Groups, the latter now a battalion consisting of No. 2 District (Major R. Thompson) and No. 3 District (Lt.-Colonel O. B. Foster, M.C.). In Lt.-Colonel Foster the battalion has a leader with experience of the conditions under which the men might well have had to fight. Major Thompson, his 2nd in Command, also possessed qualifications very necessary for dealing with invasion in the form then anticipated, when the defenders would be called upon for individual initiative as well as concerted action. With a few additions to adjust boundaries, No. 2 District became A Company, No. 3 District became B, C and D Companies, with E Company and F Company subsequently added from other battalions. Companies were finally composed as follows:—

- A.—Fulbourn, Teversham, Great and Little Wilbraham, Six-Mile-Bottom, Bottisham, Lode, Quoy and Swaffham Bulbeck.
- B.—Sawston, Pampisford and Babraham.
- C.—Hildersham, Linton, Abington, Bartlow, Balsham and Hinxton.
- D.—West Wickham, Horseheath, Castle and Shudy Camps, West Wrattling, Weston Colville and Carlton.
- E.—
- F.—Great and Little Shelford and Stapleford. (The last two were added later.)

The original companies were commanded by Major R. Thompson (A), Major C. H. Bowers (B), Major C. D. Varley (C), Major C. P. Allinson (D). Only the second of the original company commanders remain; Major Thompson was appointed 2nd in Command and Major G. C. Lacey took over command of A Company. Major Varley joined the Royal Navy and was succeeded by Major C. H. Schwind; Major Allinson was obliged to resign owing to work of national importance which took him away from the district, and he was succeeded by Major J. D. Webb. E Company was originally

commanded by Major J. Higgins. He was transferred to Wiltshire and succeeded by Major C. C. Twitchett who later resigned on account of ill-health. The company is now commanded by Major H. Cade. F Company is commanded by Major C. V. Canning, M.C., T.D.

The battalion covers an area bounded by Cambridge on the west, 2nd Battalion on the north, Suffolk to the east and Essex to the south. Apart from E Company, which comes within the Cambridge Defence Area, the area is almost entirely rural. The only villages of any size are Linton, Great Shelford, Fulbourn, and Sawston, and the village detachments are usually small and very widely dispersed.

At the start officers commanding districts were appointed and ordered to raise detachments and appoint commanders within 24 hours; invasion was considered to be imminent, and everything had to be done with the greatest haste. The distribution of arms, ammunition and clothing was being done in the private cars of the officers commanding groups and districts, and it is surprising that under the circumstances loss and confusion were not greater. Within the next four months things began to take shape; companies and battalions were formed. Denim uniform was replaced by battle dress; all sorts and kinds of new weapons arrived and training became intense. Operations with regular troops became more frequent, and from August 1940 onward combined operations against tanks and infantry units were carried out at various times by all companies. Our hastily erected barricades and trenches (constructed in many cases with more zeal and enthusiasm than skill) began to give way to more carefully considered defences; the higher command oscillated in their views on our operational rôle between the completely static and extremely mobile, and have now more or less finally settled down to an "offensive-defence."

In June, 1940, a German plane was brought down in this battalion area, the crew being taken prisoner by members of the Babraham Platoon, Ptes. Barnes, Wagstaff and Few, sen. These must have been almost the very first prisoners to have been taken by the Home Guard. E Company was the first to go into action when the L.M.G. section fired at and hit a Heinkel, and the plane was subsequently finished off by fighter aircraft.

The permanent staff began to appear in the spring of 1941. First Lt. H. C. Franklin (then a H.G. officer commanding Horseheath Platoon), took a commission in the Regular Army and became our first Adjutant. He had acted as administrative officer in a civilian capacity for the previous six months. Next C.S.M. Boulton, formerly a Sergeant in the Coldstream Guards, came as our first P.S.I., but after some very useful work he was forced to retire on the grounds of ill-health. He was succeeded by C.S.M. Lines from the Royal Norfolk Regiment, and a second P.S.I.

joined us on the posting of C.S.M. Doneathy from the Green Howards in the spring of 1943. For a long time Capt. Franklin bore the double burden of Adjutant and Quartermaster, but in November, 1942, Capt. L. G. Warren, D.C.M., Royal Norfolk Regiment, and formerly Beds and Herts Regt., was posted as Adjutant and, with his experience of active service in the present war, relieved the C.O. and Capt. Franklin of a great burden of the training work which was rapidly growing insupportable. As regards the work of the battalion officers and N.C.O.s, it is sometimes difficult to believe that the higher authorities quite realise the extent of the work that has been readily and cheerfully undertaken. Probably 99 per cent. of all ranks of the battalion is composed of men who already work very long and even excessive hours at their daily job, and the additional hours of work demanded by the Home Guard mean a real sacrifice and some hardship. But for every hour that has to be devoted by the rank and file, 2, 3 and even 4 hours have to be spent by the officers and senior N.C.O.s, if they are to train their men efficiently and cope with the volume of administrative work that has grown like a mushroom. In November, 1940, the War Office announced "His Majesty has been pleased to direct King's Commissions shall be granted to all approved commanders in the Home Guard, and that the Force shall also have a suitable complement of warrant and non-commissioned ranks." The Prime Minister himself had earlier said "The Home Guard are as much part of the Army as the Grenadier Guards."

In a widely scattered battalion such as this, the task of battalion and company officers in even keeping in touch with village detachments is very great, while the duty of the officers commanding village detachments in keeping check on their equipment and on men under their command who change with ever-increasing frequency, has been very heavy indeed. Training on a progressive programme has also been a very difficult problem owing to the constant call-up of the younger men, and their replacement by fresh recruits has thrown a great strain on the instructional staff, already too few for the job in hand. One of our greatest troubles has been to find suitable accommodation for the mass of stores, clothing, arms and ammunition that has been pouring in for the last three years. During the early days of makeshift, the ammunition and explosives had to be stored in bedrooms, chicken-houses and other dangerous and unsuitable places. Storage houses for explosives and ammunition, and accommodation for company offices were sanctioned, and some 43 houses for the accommodation of ammunition and explosives were erected. Ammunition officers are now being appointed to each company from men who have undergone a special course in the theory and practice of handling explosives and maintaining them in an efficient and safe condition.

Perhaps our greatest achievement, and the one that has probably

escaped the notice of those who have watched our slow growth, has been the great and general all-round improvement in training and discipline. This was particularly noticeable on the Third Anniversary of the Home Guard parade in Cambridge, in May, 1943. Much of the work of training battalion instructors has fallen on various members of the battalion staff. Major R. Thompson, 2nd in Command, has particularly interested himself in Camouflage, Concealment, Battlecraft and Proficiency Tests from the start. Capt. C. R. M. Cannon, M.B.E., has done admirable work as Ammunition and Weapon Training Officer, and Lt. Coe (lent to us by the 6th Battalion) has brought his skill to bear on the communications problem with the result that our Signals are probably second to none, at any rate in country districts. The medical services under Major Brown have made great headway, and the 6th Platoon Stretcher Bearers at Sawston, under the tuition of Capt. Etheridge, won the coveted 2 Corps Stretcher Bearers' Shield in a keenly contested competition in which all H.G. battalions in Cambridgeshire, Isle of Ely and Norfolk took part. In the battle platoon competition, also open to teams in the same area, B Company of this battalion were again successful in obtaining second place.

Much has been said already of the work of the company officers and N.C.O.s, and it is not too much to say that the company commanders bear the brunt of the responsibility. Without a keen and capable company commander, the keenest of village commanders find themselves greatly hampered. The company commander also bears a great burden of administrative work. Rifle ranges have been developed by the efforts of the company commanders; in this particular, A and C Companies have achieved a very real success. Rifle shooting, the backbone of attack and defence, has been systematically developed. A Cup for small bore shooting has been presented to the battalion by Lt.-Colonel O. B. Foster, M.C. It was won on the first occasion by West Wrattling Platoon, and later passed to Abington.

Many N.C.O.s and others have attended various specialist courses and passed out with credit. C.Q.M.S. Pilgrim of A Company, Sergt. L. Evans of C Company, and Sergt. A. W. Melbourn of F Company have all received a certificate of Good Service from the Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces.

4TH CAMBS. BATTALION

When Major Phillips was appointed Zone Organiser by the Lord Lieutenant, he divided his Zone into segments radiating from Cambridge, assigned the S.W. segment to the 4th Group (not Battalion) and appointed Capt. R. H. Parker, M.C., as organiser. Capt. Parker, the same day, sub-divided his huge area, which stretches from Stapleford in the east to Tadlow in the west, and from Chishill in the south to Papworth in the north, into four districts,

as they were called at the start. These districts or companies as they became later were put under the following District Organisers:—

- A.—Sir Gifford Fox, M.P.
- B.—Lt.-Colonel H. Peel Yates, D.S.O.
- C.—Lt.-Colonel A. L. Routh.
- D.—P. Randall.

Subsequently the following were appointed to assist the District Organisers:—

- A.—Capt. G. M. Macfarlane-Grieve.
- B.—T. C. Lethbridge.
- C.—Capt. P. C. D. Mundy.
- D.—A. T. Bayne Jardine.

The District Organisers appointed Parish Organisers as follows:—

NORTHERN DISTRICT (A COMPANY)

Ellisley, E. Flinders. *Croxton*, E. Bowley. *Little Gransden*, D. W. Whitlock. *Gamlingay*, J. W. P. Ellis. *Longstowe*, D. T. Fyfe. *Bourn*, F. Wombwell. *Caxton*, B. J. Matthew. *Caldecote*, A. C. Clarke. *Toft*, G. M. Macfarlane-Grieve. *Comberton*, J. L. Shearer. *Hardwick*, M. R. Fraser. *Kingston*, G. H. G. Farrant. *Barton*, H. E. Duggans. *Grantchester*, H. Banister. *Papworth Everard*, B. Tallyn. *Papworth Agnes*, J. Sibley. *Graveley*, A. Ashthorpe. *Halley St. George*, F. Brown. *East Hatley*, F. Brown. *Coton*, F. R. Burbage.

CENTRAL DISTRICT (B COMPANY)

Great Eversden, C. S. Huddleston. *Little Eversden*, E. R. Royston. *Wimpole*, A. G. Wheeler. *Orwell*, J. Prime. *Harlton*, H. R. Webster. *Barrington*, P. H. J. Hartley. *Haslingfield*, E. G. Cole. *Newton*, J. Frost. *Harston*, W. Seagrave. *Hauxton*, J. Jopling. *Great Shelford*, E. Welbourne. *Little Shelford*, Rev. E. B. H. Berwick, O.B.E., T.D. *Stapleford*, C. K. Dove.

SOUTH-EAST DISTRICT (C COMPANY)

Heydon, *Great Chishill* and *Little Chishill*, Rev. E. A. Clarke. *Ickleton*, H. Carter Jonas. *Duxford*, P. Cope. *Whittlesford*, E. Arnold. *Thriplow*, C. Scott. *Whaddon*, Rev. L. Galley. *Shepreth*, Major H. P. Mills. *Flint House*, A. L. Drage. —, R. D. Marsh. —, O. C. Clarke. *Hinxton*, J. H. Ward. *Fowlmere*, T. Jackson. *Foxton*, W. E. Cooper. *Meldreth*, M. V. Hart. *Melbourn*, A. King. *Chishill*, A. J. Waller.

SOUTH-WEST DISTRICT (D COMPANY)

Croydon, F. Farrow. *Arrington*, W. Reed. *Tadlow*, A. Duffin. *Wendy*, S. Bath. *Shingay*, S. Bath. *Guilden Morden*, A. Jennings. *Steeple Morden*, A. Bayle Jardine and W. Jardine. *Abington Pigotts*, P. W. Jakeman. *Lillington*, E. D. Tilden. *Bassingbourn*, C. Ford. *Kneesworth*, W. Rushton. *Odsey*, W. H. Fordham.

The duties which fell on these officers were very heavy and they were either on the road continuously for hours at a time, day and night, or in daily conference with the battalion commander in his H.Q. There was a hectic background which must in many ways have resembled that at the time of the Spanish Armada or the threatened invasions of the eighteenth century. All the main points were there; the inadequate force at sea, neglected and cut to the bone; the minute and ill-found army; the suspicion of widespread treason; the wonderful volunteer spirit of the countryside. "No bump" was the promise from above, and bitterly have officers of the H.G. regretted ever since that it was ever given, or being given, not adhered to. Operational orders were simple. "If anything happens, start shooting." Three hundred and fifty rifles with 10 round for each and 350 denim overalls were rushed out and left at Melbourne police station, from which they were collected by the battalion commander, and issued through companies to the homes of the village detachment commanders, often without even a chit to say their number, or a signature to show who had them. One remembers, for example, a handful of rifles dumped on the billiard table of the village inn, with ducklings waddling in through the door, and the air of subdued excitement and anticipation everywhere one went. "Any news of the invasion, sir?" "No." "Well, I suppose it will be coming along in due course," and everyone thought it was, and appeared to be utterly unafraid, although we were raising an army as ill-equipped as that of Monmouth at Sedgemoor, to face the most highly-trained and mechanised troops in the world. Home-made Molotov Cocktails to stop tanks, and a few outmoded Ross rifles to face the latest machine guns and mortars. A Company was the first to receive any weapons at all, and those were issued the very night of 14th May. Just two or three rifles to a village and a handful of cartridges. We raised a little more, for we managed to scrounge a modest quota of rounds from the Regular Forces back from Dunkirk. Some of us were even offered rifles too.

We were to block roads when the Boche landed. Anything would do. Old wagons, rollers, binders, anything. Stop the roads, trap him in defiles if you could find any, in one of the flattest countries in Europe! Get at the parachutists before they have time to form up, with a few old rifles and the village poachers' shot guns. Splendid, everyone was thrilled. It was a magnificent bluff, and it succeeded. No Boche could believe that we were so unprepared. How could we be? We had armed the country for defence in depth. What chance had the invader when everything was guarded by the men who had beaten him in the last war? Every village had its O.P. and the dangerous hours from dusk to dawn saw each village manning it, and sending out its patrols to look for parachutists, subversive characters or fifth columnists. They were there right

enough. Did not the officers back from Dunkirk assure us that the curious cryptograms scrawled on walls and trees were precisely the same as those to be seen in France, Holland, and Belgium, before their fall? Were not the coloured flares that went up mysteriously when the Boche planes were over at night just the same as those sent up by the fifth column to give away the position of an H.Q. or battery in Flanders? We did not end this hunt of the invisible fifth column till Germany invaded Russia in 1941, and then abruptly all the signs and wonders ceased. During the time the patrols were at work many a tramp was prodded out of his bed in the chalk pit by a bayonet, and forced to produce his identity card, which as often as not he had never possessed. One or two persons were collected in suspicious circumstances, who may well have been the genuine thing. The fifth column was there, but it was harried and chased more than it had ever thought possible, and in the end it realised the futility of its mission and retired into the limbo of forgotten things.

Then there was the business of siting the village defences. Day after day the O.C. Battalion, with 2nd in Command, Major A. H. Davenport, M.C., and the appropriate company and platoon O.C.s were to be found busy on bends in the road, siting slit trenches, or pits from which hidden bombers should throw Moletov Cocktails on to tanks.

The summer turned to autumn. Rifles came along in greater numbers, and the 303 Ross rifles were exchanged for 300 American weapons. On 15th September we had a real alarm of invasion and were "on our toes" for some hours. It was not so easy driving round and calling out platoon commanders in the dark. There were air raids at night. Company H.Q. were manned, and B Company had the pleasure of seeing a Heinkel 111 shot down in the searchlight beams directly over the roof of the H.Q. "The first I ever saw shot down in flames," said the company commander, delightedly rubbing his cold hands. Two parachutes billowed out like tiny mushrooms and fell away into the darkness. Soon the telephone was ringing. "Parachutists land at Hauxton," again "Parachutists landing at Harston." Several times it went and always in the wrong place. The parachutists landed in another battalion area, and B Company H.Q. thought it could hear the crackle of rifle fire as they were shot at coming down. This was only a flash in the pan, however. Parachutists in the invading thousands of Greece and Crete never arrived, and training went steadily on.

Looking back on the early months of training, it seems quite unbelievable that so much could have been done. A formless rabble has become an army. Even if it is an army which grouches and complains more than is usually the case, it is surely the cheapest army ever to be raised in Britain since the Dark Ages. The National Defence Volunteer was speedily changed to the Local Defence

Volunteer, and the Local Defence Volunteer became the Home Guard. Officers were given commissions. One company commander decided that a particular man ought to be given a commission. He discussed it with his 2nd in Command as they were driving through the village where he lived. It was Sunday morning and the detachment was drifting towards its headquarters in the village school. The 2nd in Command noticed the man in question. "There he is," he said, "if you would like to speak to him." The O.C. Company called him up to the car. He arrived with his rifle at the trail, and saluted smartly with his hand. "Mr. X," said the O.C. Company, "I have been much impressed with your soldierly qualities and appearance, and I propose, if you are agreeable, to recommend you for a commission." The man expressed his willingness and saluted again in the same manner. "Really," muttered the O.C. Company audibly to himself, "someone ought to tell him not to salute like that."

The O.C. Battalion in the early days with no staff but that of the bank, and an administrative assistant, W. A. Brightwell (who was a Boer War veteran), had to train and equip nearly 2,000 men. Battalion orders had to be drawn up and issued, innumerable conferences attended, training schemes devised and defences designed or approved. A part-time P.S.I., C.S.M. Mumford of the Royal Fusiliers was attached, and then taken away, and finally returned as a permanent and most valued addition to the battalion staff. After a year, T.A.A. took over the business of clothing and equipping the battalions, and the Zone Stores became a thing of the past. Colonel Roche Kelly, an old warrior with many children and a keen sense of humour appeared as Adjutant and Quartermaster to the battalion. It was impossible to address this distinguished warrior as Captain. At least one O.C. Company solved the problem by calling him "Your Honour" which he seemed to like. In his turn he gave place to Capt. Blagden of the Norfolks. With Capt. Blagden's help the O.C. Battalion in 1942 instituted a summer week-end camp at Thriplow, in huts put up for an A.A. Battery. These week-end camps at which upwards of fifty officers, N.C.O.s or men attended, were a great factor in welding the battalion into a single unit. Lectures on a variety of subjects were given, and the rôle of the Home Guard became clear to all who attended the camp. Bit by bit a nucleus of trained officers and men was formed, who in the winter of 1942 were to get some really effective training into the detachments which had now become platoons. At this camp an idea for improving the winter training had been thrashed out by a small Board. A Training Wing of specialist officers was devised, and this wing was sent round on Sundays to selected sites in each company area. About 100 men were put through a short course of lectures and drill at each centre, on two whole Sundays during the winter. At the same time cadre courses for officers,

N.C.O.s and men were run throughout the winter on weekday evenings at various central points. Battle drill for the Home Guard was in the air and it was the basis of a series of lectures on minor tactics which were given by Colonel W. G. Simpson, D.S.O., of the Royal Marines, who as a sergeant of the Home Guard was of great assistance in training the junior officers.

Capt. Newman of the Norfolks came to the battalion as Quartermaster in the summer of 1942. From that date, ably assisted by R.Q.M.S. Wedd, the whole situation as regards equipment rapidly improved, and by his keenness he saw to it that every man was at last equipped, and order brought from chaos in the administrative side of the companies. A series of most satisfactory administrative exercises was held under his direction during the winter, and it was shown that every platoon could feed itself and sleep in some sort of quarters in time of need.

At the end of a year the strain began to tell on many of the original commanders. The 2nds in Command, now captains, replaced the original district organisers, now majors, in A, B, and C Companies, while D came under the command of Major E. D. Tilden. Administrative work became increasingly heavy and is still a considerable burden to all commanders from top to bottom of the organisation. In all, more than 65 articles of equipment have to be listed, filed, docketed, signed for and put on returns, which may, or may not, bear some resemblance to the actual holdings.

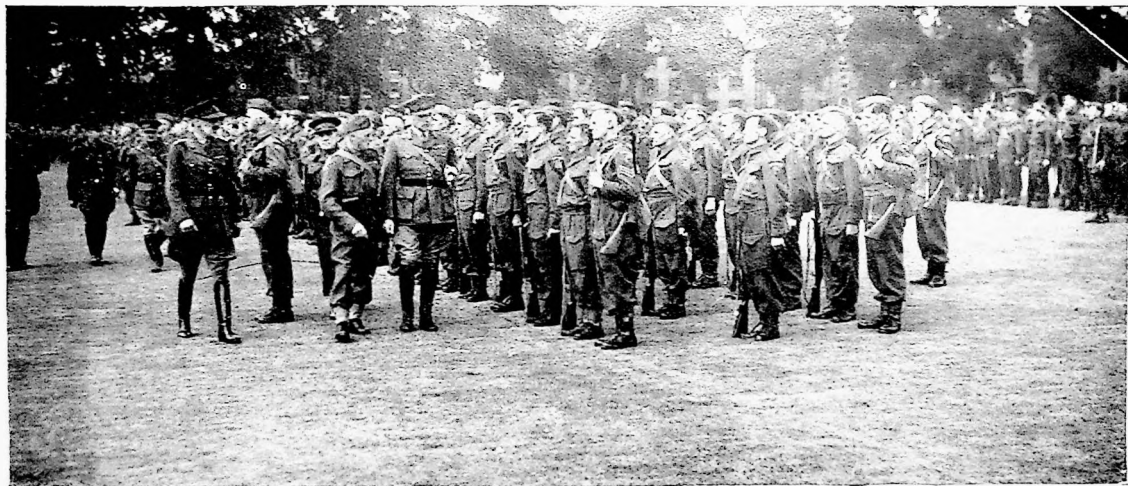
At the end of three years of striving and overcoming almost insuperable difficulties in organisation, the battalion consisted of 5 companies and 33 platoons; a body of sturdy countrymen, still waiting patiently for the Boche and ready to give him a very warm reception.

In December, 1943, an officers' conference, preceded by an excellent dinner, was held at The Lion Hotel in Cambridge. In proposing the toast of "the Guests," Lt.-Colonel Parker made a most whimsical speech. There were some gems which caught and reflected the very spirit of the Home Guard.

"I condole with the Officer Commanding 7th Cambs. (Mobile) Battalion whose battalion is so mobile that for weeks at a time he loses control of it altogether."

"In older times the Lord Lieutenant was charged with mustering the troops and keeping order. It is interesting to reflect that it might have been his duty to keep the Home Guard in order—if, indeed, such a thing were possible."

The evening was made memorable by a fighting speech from Major-General Griffin who asked the Home Guard to mould public opinion in peace time so that our Armed Forces might never again be so sadly neglected. "You know now what it feels like to be ill-armed and to lack equipment; did you ever think of us in the Regular Forces in peace time, or wonder why we



[Photo: Eastern Press Agency]

1942, CAMBRIDGE, ANNIVERSARY PARADE

Lt.-Gen. K. A. N. Anderson, C.B., M.C., Inspecting the Parade.

Also present—Colonel W. Lake; Colonel R. P. Burnett, D.S.O., M.C.; Colonel W. N. Phillips, D.L.; Lt.-Gen. J. S. Steel, D.S.O., M.C.;
Brigadier J. A. A. Griffin, D.S.O.

didn't put up a better show at Dunkirk? Gentlemen, don't let it happen again."

5TH CAMBS. BATTALION

On the evening of Monday, 27th May, 1940, Major W. N. Phillips, who had been appointed Zone commander for Cambridgeshire, called a meeting of L.D.V.s at the School of Anatomy in Corn Exchange Street, Cambridge. The response was overwhelming and it was found impossible to accommodate the numbers in one meeting and so an overflow meeting was held after. At that meeting the 5th Cambs. Battalion L.D.V. was formed, and Vice-Admiral W. Lake was appointed the first Commanding Officer, and Capt. Guy F. Dale his 2nd in Command. After the meeting names of volunteers were taken, using the various wards of the town as an easy and practical method of division, and to a large extent that method still remains as represented by the companies of to-day. The University of Cambridge immediately came to our help and generously offered us accommodation at a place which still remains our H.Q. at this present time. Hectic days followed, and many helpers generously gave unstinted service in sorting out some semblance of order from apparent chaos.

The first guard undertaken by the battalion was curiously enough done before the battalion's proper formation, when the Zone commander called for volunteers to guard the telephone exchange in St. Andrew's Street on the night of Tuesday, 14th May. Twelve stalwart men with borrowed rifles took over until relieved on the Saturday by a platoon of the London Scottish. These original twelve are still serving in the H.G. to-day, many holding very responsible rank.

Gradually we bore arms, all too inadequate, wore uniforms so scarce that they had to be passed from man to man as they came on duty. From these modest beginnings recruiting proceeded apace. Training was now becoming more efficient and the formation of Sub-Areas with directing staff was of enormous value. Capt. Thompson, one of the original volunteers, was appointed full-time Adjutant with the rank of Captain, and Capt. Munns, M.B.E., who had done yeoman work as Zone Q.M. was appointed Q.M. of the battalion, and Major (then Capt.) Higgins, was awarded the M.B.E. in recognition of his work as Weapon Training Officer. At this stage companies were formed, and it was decided to grant H.G. commissions, graded in rank as in a field army battalion. Road blocks on all principal roads in the Borough of Cambridge took up a great deal of our attention, and the defence of these was of the greatest importance.

In October, 1942, Lt.-Colonel W. Lake was appointed Sector Commander, Cambridge, and Major Guy F. Dale was appointed C.O. of the battalion, with Major G. L. Boyle, T.D., as 2nd in Command. A change now took place in the tactical rôle of the Home Guard. The likelihood of invasion receded, but the danger of paratroop or air-borne raids increased, and the Home Guard was now trained in the mobile rôle of battle platoons and mobile battle companies to deal with this danger and to back up the Field Army when they attacked the Hun in Europe. An A.A. Battery was formed and about 200 men transferred to assist in A.A. defence. At all stages of our existence, very close collaboration was maintained with all sections of Civil Defence, and many wardens were allowed to join the H.G. in a dual rôle.

The 5th Cambs. Battalion started its own Q.M. stores in August, 1940, at the Music School, Downing Place. Previously the Zone quartermaster had been responsible for all issues to battalions. The store was situated in a back room of the Music School, and this room combined office, store and issue room. In these early days, members of the L.D.V. drew equipment, etc., direct from the battalion store, and on occasions when an issue in bulk came to hand, each evening would find a queue of men waiting for denims, etc. Signatures in ledgers had to be obtained for every item drawn, and the quartermaster had many anxious times endeavouring to decipher signatures, and many times he had to help members to remember to which platoon they belonged, and often it would be found that members from other battalions had come to us for their equipment. When rifles were first issued they arrived in large crates, in which for the past twenty years they had been packed away in thick grease. This did not deter the keen and willing band of helpers who came along armed with aprons and rags, and they spent many hours in the courtyard of the Music School "de-greasing" these rifles and passing them to the armourer, who with a company of helpers was adjusting and testing the rifles before they were issued. Of this band of helpers, many of them members of the University, and also their wives, one must be mentioned by name—Mrs. Davies—who gave the greatest possible assistance to the armourer.

During the winter, issues of clothing and equipment came along very speedily and in greater bulk, and on many occasions we had to cope with as many as fifty bales of overcoats. Willing helpers soon sorted them out into sizes and quickly dispersed the chaos, only to find as soon as a clearance had been made that another great consignment had been delivered, this time perhaps boots, and again would come the great stream of volunteers anxious to become equipped and to start their training. We very soon placed the drawing of stores on a platoon basis, and platoon officers then presented us with lists giving details of the men to be equipped

and the sizes of equipment required. This procedure greatly relieved the congestion at H.Q. and when T.A.A. gave permission for administrative assistants to be employed, the stores soon came under control. From now, all issues were put on a company basis and bulk issues were made direct to the company store. Since early 1943 we have had a separate battalion quartermaster's store.

Now let us give a picture of the original formation of a typical company and how it developed from the early days.

THE COMPANY COMMANDER AND THE HOME GUARD

1940

It is often said that, as a nation, we have a habit of "muddling through." It is not so often realised that, behind our success in this inelegant process lies a talent for spontaneous improvisation and organisation which amounts almost to genius. Thus in June, 1940, a week was sufficient to enlist a thousand volunteers, arrange them by wards into platoons, equip and arm them to the limits available, and have them training under their own appointed leaders. In those early days, and for some months after, the unit was the platoon. In spite of the lack of up-to-date leaders, the Regulations laid it down that these should be too strong and sections should consist of 25. This in itself created difficulties, but none were too great to be surmounted. Each ward set about to organise its own resources, and the training went on with vigour and success. Some districts were rich in ex-officers from the last war, and these set themselves to study and impart such new ideas as had been introduced since 1918 into the training of infantry. Some districts were rich in ex-N.C.O.s, more recently retired, and these had an initial advantage. All knowledge was, however, pooled, and Battalion H.Q. acted as a clearing house for ideas and a directive force for training.

The mainstay in the very earliest days, when the threat of invasion seemed a very real menace, was the large body of Great War veterans who surged forward when the call came. Fire patrols began and guards were mounted from the start. Every siren meant a "stand-to," and the automatic readiness of these men for any emergency or re-adjustment had to be seen to be believed. The country was full of lesser Churchills—men who rose to full stature in the stress of emergency and drew on inexhaustible reserves while the need lasted. Two week-day and a Sunday parade, a weekly meeting of section leaders, lengthy occupation of the primitive defence positions during almost nightly alerts, and dawn guards of all bridges against surprise attack, imposed a heavy strain upon physical resources. It is not surprising, therefore, that

training in the early days was elementary. Formally, it never rose above the level of the Junior Officers' Training Corps; but a serious emergency would have discovered reserves of cunning and resource only half forgotten from 20 years before. The miniature ranges were working overtime though no official ammunition was issued for some time. This had to be purchased over the signature of an O.T.C. officer and sold to volunteers at the Butts. Finance was also a problem, for tea was an essential in the night watches; such minor problems could only be solved as they arose by the men themselves, for the High Command had more serious troubles than this to contend with. A monthly levy of 1s. a head was the answer, and this was in force for some considerable time.

The issue of arms and equipment was most irregular but effective. Trained quartermasters were not to hand, the regulation books and vouchers were not available, there was no transport other than private cars to be had. As the H.G. grew older and the "Q" side had to be regularised, these early issues caused many a headache for the responsible officer. Nevertheless, when in 1943 a write-off had to be effected, it was found that in a battalion which had been in existence three full years, the total value of equipment lost, mislaid, destroyed or unaccounted for amounted to less than £1 a head. No wonder that the H.G. is described as the "cheapest army of all time."

There are few high lights to record in this first year. In August one platoon put up 1,000 yards of double-apron barbed wire fencing around their isolated pill-boxes. In September, H.G. Instruction No. 14 set our feet on the path of progressive training, an occasional exercise in traffic check proved a source of friendly irritation to lawful inhabitants, and there was a good deal of sand-bagging and digging. Our night-watchers were on one occasion rewarded by a thrill; this was when the first enemy bomber was caught in a cone of searchlights and brought down by a night fighter. A grandstand seat at this was voted by all spectators to have been worth many uneventful watches. There was also one occasion when a message came through that the bells had been rung in villages east and south of the town for an enemy air-landing. At the news, the men almost visibly slipped into top-gear. There was an added purpose and alertness in every movement, which would have proved a great embarrassment to the enemy. The news was, however, only founded in rumour; and so 1940 passed out with the threat of invasion weakening, and the H.G. taking shape as a worthy member of H.M.'s forces.

1941

With the coming of the new year it was clear that emergency makeshifts would no longer do. So far the tail had wagged the dog;

and the platoons, as independent guardians of every entry into the town, had been of supreme importance. Some of the platoons were now 150 strong, and the battalion 1,500; it therefore became clear that more rigid organisation and specific responsibilities must be imposed. There had been some heart-burning earlier on when ranks had been introduced; but the reform could not be postponed any longer when the H.G. was established on a long-term basis, when training, equipment and financial commitments brought such serious inequalities of effort and responsibility. Early in 1941, platoons were fitted into a company grouping, though the organisation was at first very loose. The platoon, with its large numbers, its wide geographical spread and special responsibilities, still enjoyed a large measure of independence. To the duties of the platoon commander were now added a weekly meeting with the company commander. At these informal sessions, the company commander acted as liaison officer and interpreter between Battalion H.Q. and platoons. All secret instructions came through in this way and, in the matter of training, a measure of uniformity was achieved.

During the winter months, training was mostly indoor; and these parades were an inspiration. Despite sickness and the increasing demands of civil life, the attendance was regularly 75 per cent. or more. Drill, musketry, elementary tactics, talks about the enemy, anti-parachutist patrols and map reading made the bulk of the syllabus. But there was outdoor training on Sundays and range practices at Barton Road. Shooting at the butts in December and January was genuine Commando stuff, and in all the unpleasant circumstances a battalion average of over 50 per cent. per man was not unworthy of praise.

With the spring the scope of training widened. Tactical exercises were organised on a company basis and, on one notable occasion the co-operation of tank units and the Royal Air Force was secured. Each road-block, to which had now been added a screen of forward pill boxes, was attacked in turn by the other 2 platoons of the company. The principles of "staying put," all-round defence, surprise and speed were inculcated in this way; and here the younger element were able to learn from their elders and then surpass them. There was less drill and more patrols; sentries were painfully weaned from the example of Buckingham Palace; tank ambushes were organised and practised; first aid was properly taught, and each platoon had its team of specialists. Altogether the company was welded into a fighting force ready to take its place at the side of the Regular Army.

At the end of June an attempt was made, and crowned with considerable success, to extend the *esprit de corps* which was so admirable in the smaller units, to the company as a whole. This now numbered 400 men and this force now adequately equipped was inspected by the Commanding Officer. The only weapon lending

itself to display was the Browning Medium M.G. This was demonstrated successfully, a squad was put through their musketry exercises, a brief display of drill was given and the company marched past to the lively accompaniment of the band. This sterling body of men deserved a word to themselves. Collected together at the end of 1940, Bandmaster Cant had quickly knocked some military music into them. They were then available to companies for church parades, recruiting marches or other special occasions. In 1941 they were attached to one company for training and operational duties. In addition to their band practices and fixtures, they undertook their military training with rare zest. They challenged all-comers to shooting matches, and mastered every new weapon as it was issued. Their example was an inspiration.

The Home Guard Instruction on Winter Training for 1941-42 introduced a new note. Hitherto, improvisation and expedients had held the field. The training unit had at first been the section, under platoon direction; then it became the platoon under company direction; now the specialists were to come into their own, and it was clear that the responsible units were going to be smaller. The number of N.C.O.s who had attended special courses were now large, classes for instruction could be reduced, and the way was clear for every individual to be trained at all points. Signallers, guides, special weapon teams, night-patrols of the younger men, first-aid squads and gas specialists all received intensive training and, where necessary, imparted elementary information to the rest. About this time the Spigot Mortar (earlier known as the Blacker Bombard) was introduced in quantity into the Home Guard arsenal. A new technique was now evolved and practised, to combine to maximum effect the various anti-tank weapons so far issued—Spigot Mortar, Northover projector, self-igniting phosphorous bombs, Mills (36) grenades, machine guns, rifles and Tommy guns. Every new development was welcomed by the rank and file, and, although by this time some of the older men had been compelled by ill-health to resign, their places were readily filled by youngsters of 18. This maintained the spirit of enquiry, enthusiasm and enterprise which was so necessary through the winter session.

The sense of responsibility and service was increased by the early institution of a company H.Q. guard. At first this was not only a voluntary service, but unpaid; nevertheless, absenteeism was unknown, and twice during blitzes on the town the guard was congratulated by the Commanding Officer on the good work done. This guard has survived all the vicissitudes and strains of ever-increasing calls on time and energy, and to this day continues to do duty.

After the harvest had been gathered in there began a further series of tactical exercises. The L.N.E.R. Station was attacked in force, but subsequently the exercises were reduced in scale. Now

it was planned to make the section of 25 men a self-contained unit for training and fighting. Each section was to have its own specialist in every weapon, in gas, first aid, field craft and feeding. All-round defence was to become a reality, instead of a formula, and the section sub-divided into combat units of three men each. All this was done with a cheerful and eager co-operation which carried with it the hall-mark of success. Each section was inspected at its defence position for concealment, fire-plan, and tactical dispositions; each man was then questioned on his individual duties and responsibilities. The inspection was later repeated by the Commanding Officer with the variation that the approach was in each case made from the rear. This revealed weaknesses, of course, but by this means the faults were soon eliminated.

A very valuable large-scale exercise was organised by the Sub-Area commander on the night of 6th-7th December, in which the town was attacked by air-borne troops. This was an exhausting test at the worst time of the year, but over 90 per cent. of the company reported for duty. The exercise lasted for 36 hours, and the company front was the scene of much activity. The posts were attacked, and one platoon driven back by the umpires to the company reserve position; but the position was restored by a counter attack at dawn next morning. The effect of this exercise was most stimulating and beneficial. The spirit of the men was excellent and the temporary depression over the night's reverse was completely restored by the order for a counter attack. No serious deficiencies were discovered and morale was very healthy as a result of the experience.

1942

This year was the flowering time for the Home Guard. Numbers were high, training had worked a remarkable transformation, weapons were now adequate to defence commitments, and the spirit of the men was excellent. The programme of training was correspondingly more ambitious. Voluntary classes were now organised for all men wishing to take the proficiency tests. The response was gratifying, and the additional strain was taken easily. In May of this year the first batch was examined and 78 per cent. of the candidates were successful. Later the number was increased, making a commendable percentage of nearly forty entitled to wear the badge. A second very successful battalion exercise was held in April, when the Home Guard were allowed a new mobility. The effects of this, as in the previous scheme, were excellent; the men's interest was greatly stimulated and their understanding of the Home Guard rôle greatly increased.

During the period when growing crops ruled out any useful tactical training, it was arranged to give a full-scale demonstration

of routine and specialist progress. This comprised a dozen items, including Brownings, Lewis guns, Spigot mortars, Northovers, grenade throwing, section formations, anti-gas drill, signalling, first aid, camouflage and unarmed combat. This took place in July and was attended not only by all the local military H.Q.s but by a large number of relatives and friends of the men taking part. The programme was ambitious, but the demonstrations were carried out with expert precision. This was a red-letter day and was described by a Home Guard writer of knowledge and repute as "the best show I have ever seen put on by any Home Guard anywhere." This notice in the Sunday Press was some reward for much arduous work, and the next experiment was tackled with new heart. This took the form of a series of week-end camps in a pleasant wood adjacent to the Gogs. Here fifty men each week-end practised anti-tank tactics by night and the new battle drill technique by day. Here again hard work was a pleasure, and the eagerness of the men was ample repayment for the trouble of organisation and supply. The training at these camps was an anticipation of Home Guard Instructions, being derived from the battle craft instructions of the Regular Army. The intelligence of the men in absorbing these new ideas was a repetition of experience in all the earlier training; the Home Guard does in fact draw upon the finest material in the country.

By this time the companies, though much too large for full mobile operations in the field, formed coherent and efficient units in the scheme of static defence. Every weapon—and these were now almost too numerous—was manned by a team of specialists trained within the company or platoon. These specialist N.C.O.s had themselves undergone a rigorous course during the winter months under the instruction of the battalion W.T.O. and his staff. Every section by patrolling, camouflage, slit trenches and tactical exercises was fitted to meet any call that could be made upon it. Each platoon had now its H.Q. organisation with expert signallers, intelligence, first-aid, gas squads, assistant quartermasters and clerks. Company H.Q.s were at this comparatively late stage developed into the form and organisation of the Regular Army.

1943

Home Guard Instruction 50 on "Winter Training for 1942-3" was the high-water mark of that very able series. The training programme was now rationalised for recruits, semi-trained men and those who had completed their basic training. Battle craft and battle drill were introduced as a regular part of advanced work, and a new fillip was given when it was seriously needed. The battle drill in particular was taken up with eagerness even by the older men for whom it was judged unsuitable. The new mobility of

larger units gave a sense of power to sections and mobile reserves were organised for all companies. Tactical exercises took on a new speed, and defences were tested by units really comparable with the long expected air-borne troops.

6TH (34TH G.P.O.) CAMBS. BATTALION

When the Home Guard (L.D.V.) was first formed a large number of Post Office employees in various towns enrolled and were in some places embodied as P.O. companies, platoons or sections within the units set up in their home towns. At the end of July, 1940, the War Office decided that P.O. employees enrolled in the L.D.V. should be embodied in P.O. battalions and during August of that year the 6th Cambs. Battalion was formed, composed of P.O. employees in the greater part of Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely, Norfolk, parts of Suffolk, Bedfordshire, a considerable part of Hertfordshire with one detachment in Buckinghamshire. The strength at that time was about 1,500 men and the battalion was organised in three companies and one independent platoon under commanders as follows:—

Battalion H.Q., Cambridge	..	..	L. L. Tolley.
A Company, H.Q., Norwich	..	..	G. B. Batch.
B Company, H.Q., Bedford	..	..	A. H. Hutcheon.
C Company, H.Q., Cambridge	..	..	A. M. Hammond.
Independent Platoon, H.Q., King's Lynn			P. J. Wilson.

Subsequent changes in the organisation were that the platoon at King's Lynn was reconstituted as a fourth company early in 1941, and a fifth company was formed in April, 1942, with H.Q. at Luton and under command of Major R. E. Butler. The strength has not changed materially apart from the loss on transfer in April, 1941, of two platoons from C Company to a neighbouring P.O. battalion. At the beginning of 1942 there was an appreciable drop in strength which has, however, been more than made good subsequently. Major Hutcheon relinquished the command of B Company in June, 1942, on his removal on P.O. duties to another part of the country, and Major W. F. Fraser took over and still commands B Company. Major A. M. Hammond resigned in January, 1942, and command of C Company was for a time assumed by the Battalion Commander until in August, 1942, it was taken by Major A. C. Holden, who still commands C Company. Major P. J. Wilson resigned command of D Company in June, 1943, and was succeeded by Major F. W. Cameron.

In May, 1940, the arms situation did not exist and as one Company Commander put it:—"My earliest memory is that of detailing men for guard duty in May, 1940, and in the absence of anything

more lethal, handing them packets of pepper, short lengths of lead cabling and iron tubing. When on 1st June, 1940, a number of sporting guns arrived, we really thought that we were in a position to face any eventuality." The formation of the battalion happened to coincide with the arrival of a consignment of rifles from America and the initial issue of rifles, together with a number brought in by men transferred from other units, and a number of shot guns brought the weapon strength of the battalion to nearly 40 per cent. at its inception. A subsequent issue of rifles and of a few light machine guns in the following winter considerably increased this percentage. In 1941, Tommy guns began to arrive and although they were later withdrawn, issues of Sten guns in 1942 and 1943 have provided ample replacement.

Uniforms became available during the autumn and winter of 1940-41 and the majority of the men were clothed by the following spring. Among the exceptions a particularly distressing case was that of the 2nd in Command of the battalion, who found he could wear a No. 18 blouse but could by no means find a pair of trousers to fit; his specially-made trousers eventually arrived a few weeks before his transfer to Scotland on P.O. duties. Another which is worth mentioning arose from the shortage of caps of the more popular sizes which led to a Home Guard member turning up for guard duty complete with battle dress and civilian felt hat! Apart from such extraordinary cases the chief difficulty in regard to equipment arose from the extreme dispersal of the sub-units, which not only increased the amount of paper work but also delayed supplies, since items had to be assembled into reasonable loads in view of the necessity to avoid heavy consumption of petrol. There are sub-units in 28 different towns; from the most easterly to the most westerly is about 110 miles, and from the most northerly to the most southerly is about 75 miles.

Scattered as they are it could never be possible for the sub-units of this battalion to support each other in operations, and only very seldom and to a very limited extent can they combine for training. The policy of the battalion has been to co-operate to the fullest extent with the many other battalions within the counties mentioned above and that each sub-unit shall co-operate both for training and for operations with the Home Guard formation in its own neighbourhood. From the outset 6th Cambs. was assigned the obvious rôle of guarding the telephone exchanges and telegraph centres and of providing protection to working parties who might be engaged on repair of damage to the telephone and telegraph systems. From the summer of 1940, guards were maintained at all main centres and at some subsidiary places, though the number of personnel available was not sufficient to protect all the lesser exchanges. In those towns where the sub-unit of this battalion had more men than were required for the defence of the telecommunications

centres, the surplus was made available to the commander of the town's defences for him to use either as a reserve or at such specified places as he might direct. In view of the policy of full co-operation with all other Home Guard units, one of the major problems at Battalion H.Q. has been so to draft instructions that a battalion order shall not conflict in any locality with an order issued by the Sub-Area commander concerned, nor prevent any sub-unit conforming to the established practice of the Home Guard formation in its own locality. It will be well appreciated that this has called for the use of a great deal of imagination and for a very careful choice of words.

The sub-unit activities being so much diversified by reason of their co-operating with many different battalions, it will be obvious that no detailed review of training programmes can be given. The programme has been different in every locality, but in common with other units the progress of training has been continuous from the initial rifle training (with some squad drill) to the present battle drill standards. A great deal of thought has been given to the weapon training of the battalion, never more so than on one occasion when a platoon was practising live grenade throwing and a dog, thinking the grenade had been thrown for its special benefit, seized it in his mouth and joyfully prepared to return it to the rightful owner. Fortunately the grenade had a 4-second fuse which cut short the dog's game and averted the platoon commander's imminent heart attack. Exercises have given rise to many interesting situations and on one occasion a headquarters was wiped out by a tray which was passed in by the guard since it carried "the O.C.'s breakfast sent from the Y.M.C.A. at his request"; when the cloth was removed there was disclosed not only bacon, sausages and eggs, but also a "bomb" which promptly "exploded." (The breakfast fare is sufficient to date this incident.) In addition to weapon training and tactical work, training of specialist sub-units for signals and for first aid has proceeded satisfactorily; since the civil occupation of many of the personnel is in connection with telephone and telegraph work they have naturally had some advantage in regard to Home Guard Signals, and when in the early part of 1943, 2 Corps District organised a Signals Competition, this battalion was placed first by a short head. From the start all sub-units have received most valuable assistance and advice from Army units in their localities, and, with particular reference to aircraft, recognition from R.A.F. and Royal Observer Corps also.

On account of the generosity of the P.O., which from 1940 onwards has allowed its Home Guard members to attend training courses without loss of civil pay, this battalion has always been able to fill most of the vacancies offered to it for courses and camps. In August, 1941, the first battalion camp was run for one week primarily as a cadre course which was attended by most of the officers and

N.C.O.s; the Adjutant, Capt. A. W. James, was fortunately appointed just in time to take up his duties at this camp. In 1942 a camp was opened from June to September near Newmarket and was used by 6th Cambs. from Monday to Saturday, and by 2nd Cambs. for a week-end course from Saturday afternoon to Sunday—a co-operation which was of value to both units; and in respect of this camp the thanks of both units are due to the Division quartered nearby, without whose help the administrative problems would have been very much greater than they were. In 1943 it was apparent that the increasing pressure of civil duties would make it difficult to obtain the release of sufficient men each week to warrant setting up a battalion camp; but the P.O. Forces commander has, however, set up a camp near London to which a number of P.O. battalions, including the 6th Cambs., send a quota of men.

Although in the first place the battalion was formed of P.O. employees, who still comprise the majority of the personnel, a number of men not employed in the P.O. have since been directed to it, and have proved themselves very keen and a very useful addition to the strength. Since the number of available P.O. employees tends to decrease with the gradual call-up of men to the Forces, it is to be expected that where they are available there will be a gradual increase in the proportion of non-P.O. employees in the battalion, although having regard to the other demands on available manpower it can hardly be expected that the battalion will do other than remain predominantly a P.O. unit.

7TH CAMBS. (MOBILE) BATTALION

One of the points Mr. Eden made in his appeal for Local Defence Volunteers was that these men would have the honour and privilege of protecting their own homes and would not be likely to be called away from the proximity of their immediate locality under invasion conditions, but it was not long before the value of some form of mobile reserve force came to be appreciated. On 13th July, 1940, an advertisement in the *Cambridge Daily News* brought together a number of men who were willing and anxious to put their cars and motor cycles at the service of the county in the then highly probable event that they would be required to operate in a mobile rôle. Before official recognition came their way they were described on one occasion as "Grace's Guerillas," Lt.-Colonel John Grace, now serving with the Canadian Army, having been the prime mover in the enterprise.

Lt.-Colonel Grace, who commanded the unit from its inception until October, 1942, was then Machine Gun officer to the C.U.S.T.C. and commenced the training of the mobile unit at the University

Range, Grange Road. In those earliest days appreciable assistance was rendered by Lt. Gordon Newell, now serving with the field army, and Major A. E. Clark Kennedy, Dean of the London Hospital Medical College. "C.K." was instrumental in bringing into the fold a number of his students who acquitted themselves nobly and furnished some of the officers who later helped to build the mobile unit to battalion strength. It was a sad loss when "C.K." was forced by the pressure of his clinical duties to sever his active connection with the battalion in 1942.

While the strength of the unit was still small Lt.-Colonel Grace canvassed several of the local business houses for recruits and was successful in gathering in men from Eaden Lilley's, Joshua Taylor's, Matthews and Sainsbury's. By the end of July 1940 the Mobile Unit had become a reality and was recognised in a Corps letter dated 25th July, 1940. At this stage of its development approximately 145 men were on the roll, made up of the original group of about 25 car owners, 30 medical students who had been recruited by Dr. Clark Kennedy, two platoons of men employed in local shops, and the remainder undergraduates and other students. The battalion having set itself a very high standard it was soon apparent that some form of permanent accommodation would be essential to adequate administration and H.Q. was set up at Ferry House, Midsummer Common, in September, 1940. By this time the strength had risen and the Corps Commander had the intention of employing the unit as a mobile reserve with the primary task of reinforcing any particular area as dictated by the tactical situation. For the purpose of training, the use of the private vehicles then under command was sanctioned and all neighbouring Battalion Commanders were invited by the military authorities to give the closest co-operation to the Mobile Unit, on the grounds that it had an important job of work to perform and was an integral part of the Home Guard, by which title the old L.D.V. had now come to be known.

It might be true to say that at this time the Mobile Unit tended to run before it could walk, but this is not altogether a bad principle in the present-day warfare, when he who walks rarely gets a chance to keep up with the battle. Mobility was intended to be coupled with firepower, and the lessons learnt in those early days have been a strong element in maintaining the correct balance of fire and movement exemplified in any scheme the battalion tackles in the field to-day. In those days it was one of the aims of the unit to acquire a sound knowledge of the surrounding countryside and many miles were covered exercising the men in the art of movement, rapid embussing and debussing. A surprising turn of speed was attained, and when one Field Army colonel witnessing an exercise asked the C.O. if the men were "ordinary Home Guard," the answer was "No, extraordinary." Another description which has been preserved was given by a scout reporting the advance of the unit on a

defensive position. He warned his platoon commander of the approach of "a large body of men in miscellaneous transport."

It is thought the battalion played no small part in helping along the training of other units against whom they "played" in the course of the early road exercises. At one time and another it has operated against practically all the surrounding units and has taken on troops as far afield as Ely, Newmarket, Royston and Duxford. During an operation carried out in the first winter one company was resting in a village square in the Fens when a cyclist reported a parachute landing about two miles off. At that time ball ammunition was being carried and the company immediately went into action. On the way out of the village the local Home Guard were observed to be taking up position at strong points. As an approach was made to the killing ground we were rather disappointed to find nothing more exciting than an escaped barrage balloon. On another occasion during the Battle of Britain the battalion was caught in the open returning from Abington at the end of a night exercise by a stray enemy plane. Evidently the lights of the convoy attracted attention as a light flurry of bombs was dropped in the area of the Gogs and a number of incendiaries came down. It was noted with satisfaction that the battalion was able to debus and take cover with commendable promptitude. As far back as an exercise during the heat wave of early summer 1941 and another exercise which took place in the coldest and wettest week-end of the 1941-42 winter, the 7th have been allocated tasks in keeping with their mobile rôle and many is the tale told of the "unfairness" of umpires in refusing to permit the battalion to retain captured Bren carriers and the like taken in battle. The unkindest cut of all occurred during an exercise near Earith Bridge when the battalion R.A.P. was attending field army paratroop casualties during Saturday afternoon and some of the enemy slipped in to capture the ration truck with which they disappeared into the blue. The platoon which suffered the loss of their week-end supplies took a leaf out of the Commando book and lived on the country before meeting up with their lost truck late on the Sunday afternoon.

The umpiring of some of the earlier exercises was hardly up to the required standard, and it was no uncommon event to have a company, embussed in platoon trucks spaced at 10 vehicles to the mile, put out of action by a couple of snipers hidden up near a road junction. The tempers of the men were tempered by the weather on those occasions, as some did not mind being placed *hors de combat* if they had had a dirty night and wanted to get a bath and bed.

An outstanding feature of the activities of the battalion has been the appreciable numbers of men passing through its ranks to serve in the Regular Forces. There are already scores of officers and men in the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force who received some of their early training in the 7th. Owing to the movement of men

from the University it has also provided large numbers of officers and men to other Home Guard battalions throughout the country. The policy of training junior leaders has paid splendid dividends in this direction.

A feature of the training has been the setting up of camps and camp conditions whenever possible. The first was held in Cambridge and on two subsequent occasions accommodation was obtained near Brandon where tactical exercises were held with the local defenders. The curious bird noises in the night when the 7th bivouacs were about to be attacked by the Brandon boys are still remembered by those who took part in the schemes and some useful lessons in woodcraft were also learnt in that area. In September, 1942, to vary the training, one company undertook a 100-mile march lasting five days. Full equipment was carried and the nights were spent in bivouacs. During this march an exercise was held with one of the battalions on the line of route. For the first 24 hours the men relied entirely on the rations carried in their haversacks and later, when these were exhausted, supplies were made available at points on the route and cooked by the men themselves. The march was designed to test the ability of the Home Guard to move a considerable distance without weighty organisation and was very successful from this point of view.

The War Diary of the battalion and the Operations File record a number of such strenuous exercises and schemes undertaken to test the mobility of the unit. It can be said without fear of contradiction that the battalion has, on occasion, carried out operations which would have appalled a field army unit. Being unhampered by elaborate transport it frequently had a considerable degree of operational mobility and would have been an asset in the defence of Cambridge had this become necessary during the invasion period. Tribute should be paid to the public spirited owners of vehicles who made this possible, regardless of the rough wear and tear occasioned by habitual point-to-point chasing across country in all weathers to attain the required standard of speed and movement.

The 1943 camp was set up in Longstowe Park on the kind invitation of the Lord Lieutenant, Captain Briscoe, who found time to come along to see the battalion on two or three occasions during our stay. The location proved to be an excellent training area and intensive work was carried out during the full fourteen-day period from 15th to 29th August. "F" Travelling Wing from No. 1 G.H.Q. School under their Chief Instructor, Capt. Hodson, Beds and Herts Regiment, spent six days on the job and introduced such advanced features as battle inoculation, wood clearing, battle platoon tactics and night patrols. The weather was kind throughout this fortnight and most of the men enjoyed the best of health and spirits. Two or three of the personnel suffered slight accidents through being thrown out of Jeeps and one man was unfortunate in

damaging his foot under a Crusader track during a demonstration by an armoured troop, but there were no serious casualties. Strenuous work was carried out towards the end of the camp when the men had been toughened up and the last field day included a cross country march of 15 miles led by Capt. Dew in the Bassingbourn area. An assault course was rigged up to assist in the hardening process and it was noticeable how rapidly the men were able to reduce their times for negotiating the obstacles after a few daily turns over the course. During 1943 the development of mobile columns at company strength has been practised on several occasions and various successful exercises have been carried out within a few miles of town. Two companies of cyclists are maintained and practised in movement by road in order that any tactical situation may be met.

The battalion is organised on field army lines with an H.Q. company and four rifle companies, and mention should be made here of the officers who have not yet come into the picture. The present C.O., Lt.-Colonel D. Mackenzie, served in the Royal Artillery, 1914-19, and became 2nd in Command of one of the first rifles issued to the 2nd Battalion on 25th May, 1940, when resident at Bottisham! Owing to the petrol restrictions he decided to move into Cambridge just as the 7th were forming and became successively Platoon Sergt. of No. 12 Platoon, B Company commander in the rank of Major in March, 1941, 2nd in Command of the battalion vice Major Clark Kennedy, April, 1942, and Battalion Commander vice Lt.-Colonel John Grace in October, 1942.

Major John G. Weatherhead, the present 2nd in Command, served as platoon sergeant in 1940 and took over the duties of Adjutant for a period of some fifteen months before being relieved by a Regular officer. He then commanded D Company, and has made himself responsible for the standing Proficiency Board. Major Gordon E. Francis commands H.Q. Company after having served as platoon and company commander in one of the rifle companies. As H.Q. Company produces communications, sub-artillery, transport, pioneers, despatch riders and battalion H.Q. protection, the administration calls for a high standard of efficiency.

Capt. Pat Charvet is in command of A Company, one of the 'Varsity cycle sub-units which is at its best stalking paratroops in the area of Quy Fen or any other likely landing ground when not negotiating water obstacles. Capt. Charvet is one of the three remaining members of the battalion who were present at the birth of the unit, the C.O. and 2nd in Command being the other two. B Company is now in the capable hands of Capt. H. Metten, who will be leaving the 7th for the Field Army shortly. This officer also served in the ranks before taking over the battalion Gas Officer's duties and later the command of B Company. C Company is commanded by Capt. A. F. Doggett who doubles this duty with that of Battalion Ammunition Officer. Up to the moment this company

has operated as the second cycle sub-unit and has distinguished itself on more than one scheme by arriving on the scene of action ahead of the motorised transport. Capt. Doggett takes an exceptionally keen interest in the battalion grenade range and is at the top of his form when laying on battle inoculations and various "noises off."

Amongst the N.C.O.s, C.S.M. Harry Sale is one of the oldest "loyalists," and has been a tower of strength in producing the means of locomotion since the earliest days. Hardly a member of the battalion has not at some time or another had a breezy ride in one of the famous yellow trucks. C.Q.M.S. Shearing of H.Q. Company has come to be known as one of the fixtures, having served as day guard at Ferry House nearly two years before taking over H.Q. Company stores at battalion H.Q. R.Q.M.S. Pryce Lewis, who saw service during the South African campaign and again during the 1914-18 war, was of inestimable value on the administrative side right from the beginning before permanent staff were appointed to assist in the control of stores and equipment; and the example of a man who had first served forty years earlier can have had nothing but an inspiring effect on the younger men serving the Crown to-day.

Capt. F. G. Taphouse came to us as Adjutant from the Beds and Herts Regiment in April, 1942, and being an old Johnian was not long in getting into Cambridge ways again. Owing to the fact that we were without a Quartermaster, the Adjutant was compelled to double the part for some time. As Training Officer, Capt. Taphouse never failed to produce the required scheme to schedule when one of the companies called for an exercise or T.E.W.T. His experimental complement for a mobile column has proved successful each time such a body has been exercised in the field, as is shown by umpire's reports. Capt. J. A. Hebden joined the battalion as Q.M. just in time to organise the essentials for the Longstowe camp in 1943, and no small measure of the success of this enterprise was due to the commissariat department and the control of stores and equipment.

There is insufficient space to mention even a few of the celebrated names that have appeared on the rolls of the battalion since 1940. A well-known M.P. and the son of a one-time Director-General of the Home Guard have served in the ranks and it is generally agreed that the admixture of town and gown has worked well in the good cause. The Colleges were very patient when heavy calls were made on the services of students, and when one considers the volume of work carried out during the past three or four years by successive batches of first and second year men it must be acknowledged that, in general, tutors have responded well in supporting the national effort by encouraging their men to perform as much Home Guard work as possible in term time. Allowances have always been made for the examinee to assist him in revising his academic work at the end of

term, and the several intensive training periods laid on have given such men a chance of making up for time necessarily lost to Home Guard parades by reason of the demands of scholastic life. It is the fervent hope of the battalion that the men who have been called to vocations in the Church, Medicine, Science and other walks of life have gained advantage from their period of service in the 7th.

The general public should heed well the words of the Prime Minister when he says the Home Guard serve free gratis and for nothing but honour. It is too great a task to attempt an assessment of the value to the State of the conscientious member who attends every parade even at the three or four years' service stage. It has been said that every efficient Home Guard releases a man for overseas service in a theatre of war in which the real work of destroying the enemy can be carried out, and this is no mean achievement. It is a comforting thought that men who have since the formation of the Home Guard already attended a sufficient number of parades to equal some twelve years or more Territorial Army peace-time service, have done so at a time when their every effort has to be put into their share of war effort in their normal occupations. It gives one a feeling of pride in the Old Country to meet men who can cheerfully turn up at any hour of the day or night and in any weather to perform a routine job of work without making any reference to the fact that they have put in something like one and a half week's work at the office or other place of business. So long as this spirit holds good the Home Guard will have performed a real service to the community.

8TH (UNIVERSITY) CAMBS. BATTALION

This battalion differs in many ways from those of the neighbourhood. In the form of a Contingent of the Senior Training Corps (formerly Officers' Training Corps) it has existed for many years for the purpose suggested by its old name, that is for training members of the University so as to provide both a regular supply of young officers for the Supplementary Reserve and the Territorial Army and also a potential reserve in case of emergency. This function has been carried on and expanded during the War, but has also changed in two ways; first, cadets are not commissioned until after full-time training in the Army; and secondly, they form part of the local Home Guard while still members of the S.T.C. In 1940 the Contingent numbered about 1,200 and was made up of five units (engineers, artillery, armoured corps, signals and infantry), but there was a shortage of instructors and only five of these came from the Regular Army.

From these and other peculiarities of the Contingent, difficult problems arose during the critical summer months of 1940 and later.

Its members were not enrolled or attested in the King's service; willing and anxious as they were to take their part in case of invasion, they held no licence to shoot the Boche. This did not deter large numbers from volunteering for the defence of aerodromes and vulnerable points during the rest of the summer, after term had come to an end abruptly at the beginning of June and most Long Vacation courses had been cancelled. There was a great deal of sentry duty (often for long hours or with short intervals of rest), patrolling, and general infantry work; and also a vast amount of constructing defences. It was none too easy for those who had been trained as gunners, signallers or other specialists to learn from scratch how to handle many of the weapons provided.

On the whole the period was uneventful, though there were many rumours of fifth columnists and others ready to indicate suitable landing grounds for planes or parachutists. On one unfinished aerodrome the finding of a large L concealed in the grass led to special precautions and patrolling for the rest of the evening and night, and reports to various authorities. A works foreman on the following morning spoilt it all by explaining that he had put the mark there to indicate ground liable to hold water after rain.

The number of volunteers was bound to fluctuate a good deal as some members were called up into the Services, while others who had completed their academic work joined L.D.V. units near their own homes. Those who remained here gained considerable experience in command, organisation and administration of detachments. Some of them were incorporated in the Regular units serving in the same places, and worked as private soldiers. In some cases they commanded sections or became platoon sergeants with full responsibility—altogether most valuable training for the future.

In October, 1940, when the University came into residence again, the question naturally arose as to the best way in which the services of the S.T.C. could be utilised. As far back as 15th May it had been recognised that individual cadets, and on 18th May that complete groups, of the S.T.C. might offer their service as Local Defence Volunteers. This was a beginning, but the question how the whole S.T.C. organisation and its equipment could be utilised was not seriously discussed until December, 1940. The original idea was to use them in a static capacity and to a certain extent working in amongst the existing battalions of L.D.V. The first problem was how to reconcile the type of training for which the S.T.C. existed, that is individual training for the production of potential officers, with the needs of the L.D.V. which demanded collective training. Ordinarily the S.T.C. has no units larger than training squads, and the whole organisation of its command is for training and not for operations. Moreover, its members disappeared as soon as they were trained, so that there has always been a shortage of Cadet N.C.O.s, especially at the beginning of the academical year when

new members may outnumber old members by two to one. Old members, too, often transfer to other units within the Contingent in order to gain experience.

The supply of arms and equipment presented a further problem. The S.T.C. has enough Regular Army equipment of various more or less up-to-date types for training a limited number of cadets on successive days, but not sufficient for an operational unit when everyone is on parade at the same time. Further supplies of .303 rifles, Brens and other army weapons were not forthcoming, nor were the Home Guard weapons of other types issued instead. It was therefore some time before anything more than a skeleton force could be produced. In the early days of 1941 the L.D.V. gave place to the Home Guard and members of the S.T.C. became at the same time members of the 8th (University) Cambridgeshire Battalion, Home Guard. Unlike other battalions, it was able to form a force of all arms which was equipped, not perhaps with the latest models or on a full scale, but with vehicles and guns which were, at any rate, serviceable for operations. This had its effect on the discussions as to the best use which could be made of the Contingent. The original idea was to use it in a static capacity as part of the fixed defences. This was not altogether a satisfactory solution as it did not make use of the mobile equipment available, nor did it take into account the fact that the unit was composed of young and comparatively fit men who might be employed to better advantage. The pendulum then swung too far in the other direction; the S.T.C. were now to provide a moveable column of all arms to be used mainly for counter attack. This demanded a standard of training which might be reached possibly towards the end of the summer, but was certainly not attainable by the early spring when the force would be most likely to be needed for active service. The final and best solution was to recognise the fact that the standard of training varies from the recruit stage in October to the fully-trained stage in June and July, and to use as many of the Contingent as are sufficiently trained at the moment as a mobile reinforcement within a reasonable distance. In the latter part of the academical year the 8th Battalion can produce a very useful force consisting of armoured cars, artillery, infantry, engineers and signals. Smaller numbers only could be turned out in the early part of the year.

There are always difficulties in working dual organisation, and these have been apparent throughout. Although the number of Regular officers and N.C.O.s has been increased since the early stages, it is calculated on the basis of requirements for training and is inadequate for operations. Very valuable help has been received from senior members of the University in making the training good and progressive, but some conflict remains between the purpose for which the S.T.C. exists and the demands of a Home Guard battalion. The standard in drill, weapon training and the like is as high,

possibly higher, than in other battalions of the Home Guard, but actual training in field work is to a certain extent replaced by tactical schemes without troops. It should be added, however, that when practical exercises have been held with, or against, other troops, the 8th Battalion have, in general, given a good account of themselves. The spirit of the battalion has always been keen and adaptable. The hope of smoothing a road to a commission (now by no means a straight and easy road), and the sobering prospect of responsibility on active service, have lent reality to every stage of training. Combined exercises with other battalions of the Home Guard, with the R.A.F. Defence Force and sometimes with the Army have always been popular, not only as variations from the fixed programme of training for Certificates A and B, but also as practical experience of the "fog of war."

The Contingent has been very fortunate in keeping throughout, or getting back after a period of absence, some of their original staff who have nursed it through peace and war and adapted it to new demands without sacrificing its traditions. The posting of new instructors, both officers and N.C.O.s, has been gradual enough to preserve a real continuity of personal contacts. An awe-inspiring figure or a terrifying voice, which confronted the recruit on his first parade, has often been recognised as that of a genuine friend, long before the end of the three weeks' continuous training which has preceded his transformation from a part-time into a full-time (if still temporary) soldier.

1ST ISLE OF ELY BATTALION

About two years before the War the 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment (T.A.) held a battalion parade at Cambridge. On that occasion the inspection was carried out by a distinguished General Officer. In the rear of the battalion were drawn up some 250 members of the Cambridgeshire Regiment Old Comrades Association.

Whilst the Inspecting Officer was walking round the ranks he made complimentary remarks regarding the physique and appearance of the O.C.A. We replied that whilst they could not run about as they had done twenty years previously we were quite certain that they could give a good account of themselves if employed on static duties. There was some desultory correspondence during the ensuing six weeks with the Inspecting Officer. It was suggested that if mobilisation came there might be a great need for trained men to take part-time duty in guarding vulnerable points and that the day might even come when the old and bold could usefully help with A.A. defence. It was all to no avail, for at that time there was no obvious way of utilising trained men in a part-time capacity in war.

In April, 1939, the Territorial Army Association received an urgent summons to bring the T.A. to war strength and then double it. Colonel Clayton was entrusted with the duty of supervising the recruiting effort for the northern part of the Isle of Ely, and he at once called meetings of ex-Service men in Wisbech, March, Chatteris and Whittlesey. There was immediate response, and the full quota of recruits was obtained within a month. The first problem was to start the preliminary training of the recruits, for all were to go to camp in July and the existing T.A. companies would have great difficulty in coping with them.

Again the response was immediate. These erstwhile recruiting agents turned themselves forthwith into instructional staffs. In Wisbech, for instance, over one hundred of the old and bold claimed rifles from the armoury and taking themselves off into secluded places, took a refresher course in squad drill and musketry. We called ourselves the Wisbech Training Corps for want of a better name. We had no ranks, but as a symbol of our task we wore the Cambridgeshire blue-black-blue in our button-holes. Jackson was appointed Adjutant to detail squads and instructors. Smith became Quartermaster; there was not much for him to do on the Q side, but he controlled a band of willing clerical workers who compiled enrolment forms, nominal rolls and returns. Nobody quite remembers who appointed Martin, but he was found in the stores counting pull-throughs and murmuring "You can't have it—we haven't got it." Every evening at 6 p.m., section leaders used to report to take over weapons and the squads detailed to them. Others collected rifles and tripods and dashed out in their cars to the surrounding villages. Clothing and equipment for the newly-raised Territorial platoons began to arrive, the "Wisbech Training Corps" took it over and issued it. Eventually the day arrived when the men entrained for camp. We all saw them off; a really fine piece of work had been completed.

This prelude explains how smoothly the Home Guard was constituted in this area one year later. Mr. Eden's broadcast took place on the Tuesday evening. Within a quarter of an hour the first applicants were filing into local police stations and clothing began to arrive within 48 hours. We already had lists of section leaders, instructors and orderly room staffs. We took the additional precaution of going through the lists of applicants to find what former warrant officers had enrolled, and amongst them was Biart. As he worked and lived near the police station he was directed to commence sorting out the bales of clothing with Martin.

There was a newspaper announcement requesting recruits to attend at the Corn Exchange on Sunday, 19th May. When we entered the hall there were some 800 present. Section leaders were ready and we immediately commenced sorting out the men by parishes. These parish groups were further sub-divided into men

with previous service and men with no experience. We went for quality rather than quantity, and doubtless made mistakes in selection, but equipment and arms were severely limited and the first essential was to obtain numbers of men who could be rapidly organised for immediate action. As the sections were formed they were marched across to the police station where the Q side were in readiness to issue denims, L.D.V. armlets and arms. Denims were of three sizes, 5, 6 and 10. If your figure didn't correspond it was just too bad. The caps were all 6½ in.; if you normally wore a 7¼ in., you just had to remember that there was a war on.

The "G" side likewise were busy. Alarm posts had to be chosen and arrangements made for preliminary training or rather refresher courses in arts once understood but largely forgotten through disuse. Our primary rôle was that of anti-paratroop action. At a G.S. Conference we were informed that our job would consist of:—

- (a) Manning observation points from dusk to dawn to give warning of hostile paratroop descents.
- (b) Endeavouring to shoot the paratroops before they landed, and failing that, to mop them up before they had a chance to collect their arms and become organised bodies.

As regards the latter, we made mental reservations. There were some doubts as to the practicability of mopping up armed bodies of desperate men through the medium of quasi civilians equipped with rifles and 10 rounds of SAA.

Observation posts were quickly chosen and manned each night at dusk by nucleus garrisons. It was originally ordained that the whole of the L.D.V. force would muster at alarm posts every time the siren sounded, even if the men lived several miles away from their posts. This order was varied from necessity after there had been three sirens in one night and some men had cycled backwards and forwards 18 miles between 10 p.m. and dawn. Simultaneously evening training parades commenced for the trained men and recruit drills for the untrained. The parades of the trained men were encouraging; they "jumped to it" in a most inspiring manner. It was better, however, when one merely listened and didn't look as well; the precision of the arms drill and the way they kept step was rather marred by the extraordinary appearance caused through the fit of the denims and, above all, the ridiculous 6½-in. sized caps perched on the top of shining craniums! One avoided where possible giving the order "about turn" because it was perfectly certain that it would result in the temporary loss of at least 30 per cent. of the caps.

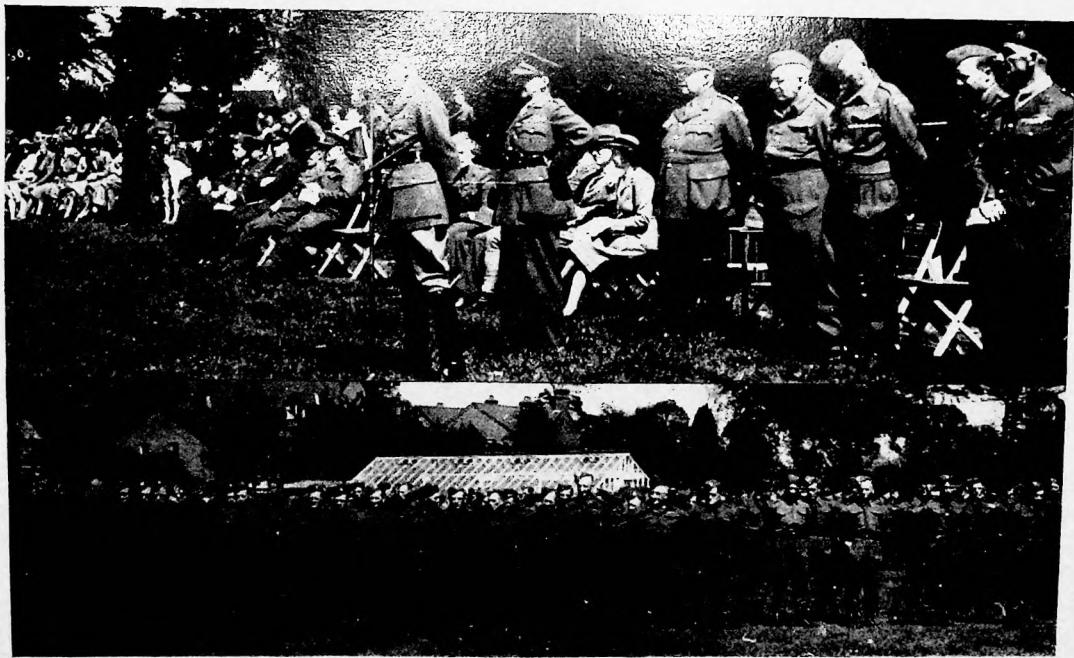
Adjustments had to be made on the Norfolk-Isle of Ely borders. Whilst the authorities set great store by observing county boundaries there was no guarantee that the German invaders would observe the same rules. Accordingly Clark and his men from Upwell,

Outwell and Christchurch were taken under the wing of the Norfolk Zone organiser, whilst we retained responsibility for the Norfolk villages on the outskirts of Wisbech.

France fell, demonstrating the lesson of unchecked progress by armoured forces through undefended towns and villages. Road blocks and the manning thereof became the order of the day, but still coupled with the original rôle of anti-paratroop action. We came under the wing of a field army Brigade. Troops were lent to help with the siting and construction of defences. Whittlesey and Thorney had their full share of these activities; sappers prepared bridges for demolition and inserted the charges and life became more and more hectic. A period of unco-ordinated effort ensued. At one time there were elements of five different field companies coming daily to the area. Colonel Clayton went out one afternoon to inspect progress on a defensive position which was being constructed by sappers and infantry. Five hundred yards away another party was constructing another series of positions; neither party knew anything about the other.

Some measure of co-ordination was achieved by the arrival of a Brigadier as Area commander and Colonel Layard as Sub-Area commander and loose ends were gradually tied up. The Brigadier's first visit coincided with the arrival of Molotov Cocktails—the use of which he proceeded to demonstrate. All sorts and sizes of bottles were filled with a mixture of petrol, taroil and paraffin. The idea was that the thrower lighted the fuse attached to the neck of the bottle and then threw it at the advancing tank when the glass broke and set the tank on fire. Unfortunately, many of the bottles had leaky corks and there was considerable risk of the thrower's backward movement of the arm setting his uniform on fire. On one occasion a platoon commander had just thrown one of these missiles and was explaining to his men that they were foolproof and that there was nothing to be afraid of. Whereupon Pte. Buggins stepped forward from the ranks, halted three paces from the platoon commander and saluted smartly—"Yes, Buggins?" "Excuse me, sir, your breeches arse is on fire!"

Invasion preparations on the other side of the Channel increased the tension. Alert periods became frequent. Road block sentries had to inspect identity cards of all passing through after dusk; lorries had to be stopped and examined to see if they were being used for conveying hostile troops or fifth columnists. About once a week some car with a particular number had to be stopped and held. If it did not stop it was to be fired upon. The general public were not too helpful and could not understand the need for these measures. Considerable trouble was experienced with junior officers of the Field Army who were most indignant at being stopped and asked to prove their identity. One motor cyclist tried to rush the sentries on the south of Wisbech. He was brought down by the



[Photo: E. L. Witcombe, Wisbech]

"FEN TIGERS ON PARADE"

Major-General D. G. Johnson, V.C., C.B., D.S.O., M.C., addressing 1st Isle of Ely Battalion Home Guard, May, 1943.

Also present—Major-General R. M. Luckock, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., Hon. Colonel The Cambridgeshire Regiment; Col. W. P. Cutlack, C.B., T.D., D.L.; Lt.-Col. M. C. Clayton, D.S.O.; Capt. R. W. Blart, D.C.M.; Lt.-Col. H. R. Hooper, O.B.E., M.C., T.D.

first shot which struck him immediately in front of his rear mud-guard.

We were still short of arms and uniforms. There was a certain amount of moral backing in stopping cars at night when properly armed and in uniform, but it was not so easy in a mixture of khaki and plain clothes. Late one night an L.D.V. corporal attired in an L.D.V. armlet, civilian overcoat and bowler hat, and armed with a 12-bore gun, held up an officer at a road block. The officer was highly indignant and was refusing to prove his identity, "It's O.K. by me, sir; you can stop here until a real officer comes along—that is if one turns up before I go to work at 6 a.m. Bill! just take this — along and lock him in Payne's cowshed."

On 4th August, 1940, the multitudinous sections in the area were formed into battalions. Colonel Clayton assumed command of the 1st Isle of Ely Battalion, whilst Colonel Cutlack who had hitherto acted as Zone organiser took over the 2nd Isle of Ely Battalion. We took under our wing the Whittlesey and Thorney detachments. Biart became unofficial (and part-time) Adjutant, whilst Francis Smith retained the duties of Quartermaster. Martin became general bottle-washer at H.Q. with the badges and title of R.Q.M.S. At this juncture the battalion consisted of the following companies, the ranks of the commanders being those later granted:—

A Company	..	..	Major H. N. Jackson.
B	..	..	Major G. C. Munday, M.C.
C	..	..	Major C. F. Wright.
D	..	..	Major E. L. Jones, M.C.
E	..	..	Capt. S. A. Woodrow.
F	..	..	Major A. V. Smale.
G	..	..	Capt. W. F. Whiting.
H	..	..	Major A. M. Sewter.
I	..	..	Capt. W. E. Morton.

A few weeks later S Company was formed under Capt. W. V. Smedley. Major J. R. Dawbarn, who had been a detachment commander from the outset, was lent temporarily to command the March detachment of the 2nd Battalion. Army rank, however, was not granted to officers until some months later, and in the meantime our shoulder straps were adorned with blue tapes signifying the position we held.

We were not greatly enamoured with the title allocated to the battalion. The word "Cambridgeshire" was missing. In place of the official shoulder title we put up the Cambridgeshire blue-black-blue flash and we have worn it ever since. The transition to a battalion basis involved a good deal of time and energy. Company areas had to be evolved and defences brought into line with new requirements. New and fearsome weapons of the Heath Robinson variety began to arrive as did Lewis guns and ammunition.

The Battle of Britain period brought a series of alarms and mustering. The first alarm left this unit untouched—we were never called out. Working on the strictly county basis some staff officer apparently ignored the fact that the Isle of Ely is not the same as Cambridgeshire. The second general alarm—and one for which there was full justification—gained us valuable experience. The anti-climax came in the evening when someone forgot to pass the "Stand-down" order to us! There were other alarms mostly of a local nature. One Saturday evening returning at midnight from inspecting posts the Commanding Officer was stopped by the police and instructed to repair to the police station forthwith. A very excited S/L officer was closeted with the Superintendent. He had received information from his H.Q. that parties of fifth columnists and enemy agents would be touring the countryside during the night. Pending confirmation of this report through normal channels our C.O. thought the case would be met if railway gates across roads could be closed at short notice over certain areas. This involved calling out the local stationmasters and through them the signalmen at certain gates which were not normally occupied on the Saturday-Sunday nights. The only material result was a file which was added to at intervals over many months by the railway company, advancing reasons why the Commanding Officer should pay the cost of the additional hours worked by the gatekeepers.

Once we had changed to a battalion basis we started to step up training. The Home Guards, as they were then termed, welcomed mobile training as a change from the everlasting holding of road-blocks and purely static duties. We chased fugitive and imaginary bodies of German paratroops over miles of open country and ditches. We searched orchards (and usually open fire upon our own platoons). We even engaged in serious musketry on the range. This was tempting Providence too far; some genius stepped in and declared the range to be unsafe. Firing was suspended pending the findings of a Board, and the whole proceedings disappeared into somebody's pending file for six months. Our irritation and sense of frustration were not lessened by the fact that the Field Army made the fullest use of the same range throughout the banned period.

The post Battle of Britain period also marked the decision of the War Office to treat the Home Guard more on Army lines. Gone were the days when you could get a plain "Yes" or "No" from above. The Home Guard had fastened upon it the faults as well as the advantages of the Army staff system. Biart took over Adjutant, a job which he had been doing unofficially on a part-time basis for some months past. Howard was the natural selection for Quartermaster. He had served on and off ever since 1915. This was the turning point in our gradual transition from a collection of individuals to a fighting unit. For security reasons this outline cannot be continued further, but these notes give an indication of how

we started, the difficulties we had to overcome and the way men of all types and from all stations of life sprang to it when the call came. Every one of these men realised that if invasion did come he would be faced with a fight to the death. Capture, at the best, would have meant the firing squad. We laughed at ourselves, but underlying everything was a feeling of grim determination.

We can fairly claim that the same feeling lives on in the 1st Isle of Ely Battalion Home Guard.

2ND ISLE OF ELY BATTALION

Many of us will recollect our visit to the local police to put down our names after hearing Mr. Eden's broadcast. Then followed some few days of waiting with nothing much happening and most of us wondering whether we should be wanted or not, until on a well-remembered Saturday and Sunday some of us received a visit from the Superintendent of Police accompanied by Major Posth. This visit was for the purpose of selecting future section leaders. Having secured the co-operation of some likely volunteers Major Posth called the first parade at the police station to get men sorted out.

Rifles followed a few days later and it was very interesting indeed to see the "old hands" cleaning and examining these rifles, swapping notes, discussing points and comparing them with the carbines they used to use many years back. The first full-dress parade with rifles and uniforms was a memorable occasion. At Ely it took place on the Barracks Field and how well we all remember that walk through the street to the field in those denim suits. Some, of course, fitted very well, but mostly they did not, and it was small wonder that there was many a laugh and joke at our expense. One wag indeed shouted across the street, "It won't matter now if Hitler does come, for when he sees this lot he'll just die o' laughing."

Major Posth had no easy task in forming sections for each road-block, but finally we were sorted out and then the fun began. Each section leader was told to move his section off and begin some sort of training. Some of the leaders of course had been good infantrymen, others were ex-cavalrymen and artillerymen, whilst others had at some time or other been good men on board ship. To say the least of it there was a certain lack of uniformity in those early instructional periods. In almost all cases, however, the section leaders had been well selected; and though their previous training had been along varied lines, their hearts were right in their jobs and they soon began to get things into shape. Those responsible for training soon found that the biggest problem was the old soldier. Either he was very good indeed, but wanted his own way in almost everything, or he took the view that he had done all this over twenty years ago and had nothing to learn. Gradually, however, these difficulties were overcome and some of the "old hands" who were prepared to come into line and adopt more up-to-date methods

proved absolutely invaluable. These were very difficult days for Colonel Cutlack and Major Posth with such a large area to be covered and sections to be formed all over the Fen country where communications were often very bad.

It was decided that battalion H.Q. should be at Ely and the battalion area should cover the S.E. portion of the Isle of Ely with companies as follows:—

A Company	at Ely ..	.. Major A. F. Buck. 2nd in Command Capt. C. E. Cross.
B	.. at Chatteris ..	.. Major G. W. Walker. 2nd in Command, Capt. R. B. W. Hosken.
C	.. at March ..	.. Major I. B. Levett, and later, Major J. B. Forgan.
D	.. at March ..	.. Capt. T. Bloy, later taken over by Major J. Fisher.
E	.. at Littleport ..	.. Major J. Crane. 2nd in Command, Capt. C. Flunder.

In spite of all difficulties good sections were soon in being for all road-blocks in Ely, March, Chatteris and Littleport, while sections in the villages had the job of observation and reporting.

In the matter of training, each section leader was doing his best to get some military knowledge and some idea of military appearance into his men, but most of us were up against very difficult problems owing to shortage of training equipment and accommodation. This soon began to bring out all kinds of bright ideas, and those well acquainted with the force will always remember the numerous ingenious training gadgets which were brought into being by keen officers and N.C.O.s in their zeal to get the subject over to the men. Many an employer's tools and workshops have had to render an unknown service to the Home Guard both in and out of hours, but no matter, the cause was a good one. All the men by this time were very anxious to try out their rifles, but with ammunition in so short supply, this was out of the question. Later, however, we went to a sand pit to test our rifles. This effort was only a partial success as many of the men were out of ammunition before they had properly got on to the target. A few weeks after this we were given the use of a good range in Huntingdonshire and this time the results were much more reassuring, and it soon became evident that the L.D.V. could shoot with the best of them. This keenness with the rifle has been an outstanding feature. Further evidence of this was brought out on the miniature range after the battalion took over the Drill Hall at Ely. A series of shoots was arranged against other units, including teams from Field Force and Civil Defence, and though the running was at times very close, the home team was never beaten.

The Battle of Britain provided exciting times, with a "Stand-to" period over one week-end followed by orders to report at road-

blocks at each siren. Members of the old L.D.V.s will remember those days and nights; two in particular stand out clearly. In the first case the alarm was sounded in the late evening, followed by the "All clear" about midnight; men returned home, only to be recalled almost immediately and they stayed out until morning. The following night gave us more calls and some excitement for Ely and the surrounding district. Bombs fell on the outskirts of the city, causing one fatal casualty and also killing several animals from a milking herd. That night several enemy planes were brought down and no less than three of these were witnessed from Ely road-blocks. For several weeks during this period a regular dusk and dawn patrol had to be kept going, and many will recall some difficult positions in which they found themselves. In the case of Ely this situation improved a little when we moved to the Water Tower as a look-out, but here too comes a painful memory. The look-out once reached was very good and spacious, but first the watchers had to scale a long ladder fixed vertically to the wall, and this was a somewhat awe-inspiring journey for the middle-aged and rotund, especially those with any distaste for heights. More than one standing patrol had to manage with one stout-hearted member up aloft and the rest lending moral support from below. Nevertheless, the work was carried on and men willingly left their beds at 3 a.m. to be on the look-out in case we were due for visitors on that particular morning.

With regard to accommodation, in the very early days the battalion had no headquarters beyond a room at the police station, which soon proved entirely inadequate. Stores and ammunition were issued to section leaders who had to keep them in back rooms and under beds. In the country districts ammunition was given to the men, for they were quite sure it was not good policy to have a rifle without anything to use in it when we were likely to be invaded at any moment, and everyone was just as sure that this was the very place they were going to select for paratroop landing, though none were ever able to explain quite why. It was eventually decided to take over the Badminton Hall in Egremont Street as our headquarters and things were much better, but even then the position was far from satisfactory as there were no lock-ups for stores, etc., and many items disappeared in real "old soldier" fashion. In April, 1941, we moved, and the new accommodation made a very great difference in many ways, both in matters of administration and training.

During all this period the Commanding Officer, now Lt.-Colonel Posth, was carrying on the whole work of the battalion with a little help from various members who could spare the time. With good office accommodation now available a move was made to get a clerical staff together to deal with the ever-increasing office work. About this time the decision was made to appoint adjutants and

quartermasters to the Home Guard. In the matter of a quartermaster the battalion has been very fortunate. Capt. A. H. Godfrey, who was appointed early in 1942, has been with us ever since. He at once set to work to organise the "Q" side, and made himself so thoroughly and wholeheartedly a part of the battalion that his appointment has been a matter of great satisfaction to everyone—officers, N.C.O.s and men alike. The battalion has been less fortunate in the matter of adjutants as no less than five changes have taken place. This has undoubtedly had a bad effect on the whole battalion, as it has meant so many changes in policy with regard to training. Some of these training difficulties have recently been to some extent smoothed out by the appointment as Training Officer of Lt.-Colonel H. R. Hooper, who, by keeping in close touch with the staff instructors, C.S.M. Sawle and Sergt. Wood has ensured greater uniformity throughout.

To return to 1941, recruits continued to come in and the battalion grew apace, until in 1942 it was decided to divide the area covered by A Company, now 850 strong, and form a new company at Littleport. This was put into effect in May of that year. This was a step in the right direction but with the new order drafting men into the Home Guard the battalion quickly grew and discussion took place regarding the possibility of forming a 3rd Ely Battalion, but nothing was done for some time. Autumn, 1942, however, brought two great changes in the battalion, the retirement of Lt.-Colonel Posth and the decision to split the battalion. Lt.-Colonel Posth who had done a great deal of hard work all along and at this time was not having the best of health, reached the age limit in November and asked to be allowed to retire. This was agreed to by Sub-Area and the battalion was to be divided and reorganised, the new battalions being taken over by Cross of A Company and Walker of B Company.

The new arrangement was not actually completed until January, 1943. The new 3rd Battalion had its headquarters at the Wheat-sheaf, Chatteris, with Capt. Rhodes as Adjutant and Capt. Apple-whaite was Quartermaster. Later this headquarters was moved to March. The new battalion was formed by taking over B, C and D Companies in Chatteris and March, whilst 2nd Ely retained A and E Companies. In the reorganisation of 2nd Ely the new companies were arranged as follows:—

A Company at Ely	..	..	Major J. R. King. 2nd in Command, Capt. H. Butcher.
B ,, at Ely	..	..	Major F. H. Stockdale. 2nd in Command, Capt. McFie.
C ,, at Littleport	..	..	Major J. Crane. 2nd in Command, Capt. Flunder.

D Company at Haddenham . . Major B. Miles. 2nd in Command,
Capt. C. Hale.

With Major A. F. Buck, 2nd in Command Battalion.

In all Home Guard battalions there have without doubt been some very difficult times, but against these there have also been for all of us some better times upon which we may reflect. In 1942 this battalion was well placed in a Tank Recognition Competition arranged by the Brigadier. The team, which was well trained by Lt. McFie, held 3rd place, with one member, Corpl. G. Clarke, taking 2nd place and qualifying for a special certificate offered by the Brigadier.

The May anniversary has always been a high spot in Home Guard events. In May, 1942, at Ely, a parade was arranged to show the public the advance made in our general turnout and equipment. The demonstration was attended by the Sub-Area Commander, Colonel Burnett, and took the form of sections representing different stages in the development of our force, from the time when we had to turn out partly in "civvies," until the time when we were able to produce a fully equipped battle platoon which marched on to the ground in very convincing style.

The 1943 anniversary was a great occasion for the Isle of Ely. General Johnson, V.C., D.S.O., M.C., paid a visit to the three battalions. At Ely an Inspection and March Past was arranged and General Johnson addressed the battalion. The event, with the whole battalion parading together for the first time, and meeting such a distinguished visitor, did all of us an enormous amount of good. Many members of that parade afterwards remarked that they had no idea that any Home Guard unit, much less our own, could stage such an impressive and soldierly display and their pride in their unit increased accordingly. Certainly on that Sunday morning General Johnson did the battalion a very great service. We were left with the feeling that, in spite of all our difficulties and our moments of depression at our utter inadequacy and unpreparedness we really had made some progress and it was worth while to keep carrying on. Even so, we shall be a long time before we all reach the standard of the gallant Home Guardsman of whom the following story is told:—

Middle-aged and somewhat shortsighted, he wore double lens glasses, but he was full of enthusiasm and was taking part in a night exercise. They crossed a field in which a bull was loose—it resented the military interlude. The platoon decided to make a hurried retreat, and they rushed for the fences and gate, but they were horrified when they turned and in the dim moonlight could just discern their shortsighted comrade in a desperate tussle with the bull. Grasping the horns he was making a frantic effort to throw the animal. Finally, after a few tense moments the bull broke away

and disappeared in the darkness. When the Home Guardsman reached his comrades the platoon commander was full of praise. "By Jove," he said, "that was a wonderful effort, I've never seen a pluckier thing in my life. I shall see this is reported to the proper authorities." Still panting and mopping his brow, the shortsighted member replied, "Oh! but if only I could have stuck to him a few minutes more I'd have had the — off his bike."

3RD ISLE OF ELY BATTALION

The story of the battalion can be written in a fairly short space, as it is the youngest battalion in the Sub-District, being formed in January of 1943.

In the August of 1942, higher authority realised that it was practically impossible to administer a battalion of the size of 2nd Ely, and moves were afoot for a split when the new battalion could be formed. In due course the framework was worked out and it was known that the 3rd Ely would include the old Companies B, C and D of 2nd Ely. On 12th December, 1942, all officers of 2nd Ely attended a meeting at the Church Rooms, Chatteris, and were addressed by the Sub-Area Commander, Colonel Burnett, who first of all made a presentation to Lt.-Colonel Posth, who that day relinquished command of 2nd Ely, having reached the age limit. Colonel Burnett then stated that in view of the large area and numbers of men in the old battalion it was intended that a split should take place with Lt.-Colonel Cross in command of the 2nd Battalion and with Major G. W. Walker to command the new battalion, when the necessary formalities were complete.

The following company appointments were then suggested with the reorganisation of various platoons:—

Major R. B. W. Hosken. A Company, covering the Chatteris area, the two outlying platoons, Benwick and Manea, being taken from him and posted to B Company.

Major F. Wood. B Company. An entirely new company formed from the following platoons: Benwick, Manea from A Company and Doddington, Wimblington and Stonea from C Company.

Major E. Johnson. C Company, covering the March town area, the outlying platoons of Doddington, Wimblington and Stonea, being taken from him and posted to B Company.

Major F. Fisher. D Company, with no change in personnel.

On Saturday, 16th January, with the nice skill of a professional conjuror, higher authority informed those concerned that the battalion would function from 09.00 hours, Monday, 18th January.

On that day the names of the Adjutant and Quartermaster were also forthcoming, and, in fact, Captain Applewhaite reported complete with a supply of office stores. The Adjutant, Capt. G. L. S. Rhodes, reported on the Monday and the battalion began to operate. The 3rd Ely Battalion must be one of the few battalions in the Sub-District that had as headquarters a publichouse, although the licence was not in force, and in the first few weeks things were certainly rather difficult, as owing to labour and material shortages the very necessary alterations could only be done in stages; still, in spite of extreme inconveniences, the Adjutant and Quartermaster got their work done in the midst of dust and the banging of hammers. The lighter side of things came when one day a gang of outside workmen came in and asked for PINTS. When these were refused the spokesman of the party said, "The — Army has no right to take over a pub for battalion H.Q. or for any other purpose."

As the months slipped by the 3rd Ely with the capable and energetic assistance of Capt. Rhodes and Capt. Applewhaite sorted out inter-Company affairs, found accommodation and generally got themselves into shape. By April it was quite evident that the existing headquarters was not large enough to handle the affairs of the battalion, and it was decided to transfer. Once settled in its new headquarters the battalion commenced to expand internally, and at long last was able to provide reasonable accommodation for the Specialist Officers.

The battalion had now got fairly into its stride and started to put in training on an organised basis. In May the third anniversary of the formation of the Home Guard was celebrated all over the country and this battalion was sufficiently fortunate to have as the inspecting officer a very distinguished soldier—Major-General D. G. Johnson, V.C. The battalion was paraded on the March cricket field, was inspected very thoroughly and was then marched past a saluting base in Broad Street, and dismissed by companies at the station. In view of the spread-out nature of the battalion area and transport difficulties, such a parade, gratifying as it was, is not easily repeated.

The usual Home Guard summer camps were now in the offing and this battalion through the kindness of the March Golf Club, were able to run six consecutive week-end camps which proved popular and enabled quite a lot of training to be accomplished. In late July the O.C. C Company asked for his discharge on the grounds of ill-health, and in due course the company command passed to Capt. P. Batchelor. Part of August and September was rather slow from an active point of view as the greater part of the personnel were engaged in harvest work, and all but Sunday parades were discontinued. The battalion looks forward to the winter with the object of improving the general training of all ranks, in order to be able to fulfil its operational duties should the occasion arise.

In the foregoing short history of the battalion no attempt has been made to single out any particular Home Guardsman. When it is remembered that the battalion was only formed in January of 1943, and that we had three years to catch up with older units, the immense amount of work and loyal service put in by all ranks to ensure that the battalion should run smoothly is very fully appreciated.

Now the original companies shall briefly tell their own story as they were the old hands from which the re-constituted battalion was built up.

B COMPANY

The company was originally commanded by Major G. W. Walker with Capt. R. B. W. Hosken as 2nd in Command, and there was no change until the formation of the 3rd Battalion, when the command of the company passed to Major Hosken, with Capt. S. Richardson as 2nd in Command. In the early days the Chatteris Volunteers had no available accommodation, and relied on the use of such small rooms as could be lent them by the police and civil defence authorities. Roll-call, even then quite a serious matter, was done either in the street opposite the police station, with a large number of small boys as interested and somewhat saucy spectators, or in the yard at the back of Mr. Arthur Rickwood's property lent by the kindness of Mr. A. Heading. In these restricted places men re-learned lessons they had had drilled into them in the hard days of 1914, and after a full day's work, two hours of arms drill followed by an all-night turn of duty on the various road-blocks should have been enough to damp any man's ardour, but such was the spirit of the L.D.V. that few complaints were made.

When denims were issued, the court room at the police station was placed at the disposal of the men by the kindness of Inspector Bush, and the scene looked more like a jumble sale than an issue of uniform. Men came in straight from work and expected that the denims would be like suits off the peg only to discover that in the majority of cases the suits had been made for men with enormous girths and neck bands that even Carnera could not have filled, but as the same conditions prevailed all over the country, denims were accepted as the lot of the L.D.V.

As the months passed the number of men had increased sufficiently to warrant asking for a headquarters and the company, if in those days it could be called such, moved into the Crown Theatre, which if inconvenient, was at least a move in the right direction, and it enabled the first issue of boots to be made, with some degree of comfort. During the whole of this time men were putting in all-night duty, either on road-blocks or observation posts, the last-named being on top of Mr. Seward's house; a draughty spot with little room for movement and a drop of some 30 feet on one side.

The only protection was a number of sandbags, laboriously filled and carried up through the private part of the house, by a number of hardly jubilant blokes who rapidly discovered that lumping filled sandbags up three flights of stairs, up a short ladder, and then on to a roof was not the ideal way of passing a quiet evening. In due course it was found that such a quantity of sand was having a serious effect on the structure of the roof and was holding enormous quantities of water, so one day a small squad went upstairs and pushed them over the side, proving as one wit said "what goes up must come down." Needless to say the speaker had not carried any of them up.

The men on the various road-blocks had in the first case been posted as far as possible to blocks near their own homes and true to old Army habits had dug themselves in, borrowing sheds from kind owners and acquiring beds, etc., to put in them. In fact, the comfort of one particular squad and their comradeship was such that when orders were given to discontinue all-night duty they nearly mutinied.

In the late part of 1940 the company moved out of the Crown into a small corrugated iron building, the Salvation Army Hut, where not more than 15 men could sleep at a time—devilish cold in winter, roasting hot in the summer, and with this headquarters went a very small one-roomed shop to serve as a store. About this time battle dress was issued and the authorities' idea of a good joke was to send nearly 300 suits, none of them baled, at approximately 4.30 p.m. on a winter's day and dump them in the small store, with the result that when the door was next opened quite a number fell out into the road. The time taken to sort them out and worse still, to issue them to men, who taking denims as their size insisted on the same size in battle dress, still seems rather a nightmare.

It began to be felt that, with training, should go some range practice and arrangements were made, through the courtesy and kindness of the Station Officer, to use a range at the Upwood Aerodrome, and it was never difficult to get volunteers, for the very good reason that once firing was completed men could and did get flights in Service planes. Some of us will remember the delightful casualness of the R.A.F. with parachutes, and the old joke about "If it does not open bring it back and we will give you another."

In the middle of 1941 most men of the Home Guard had some degree of training and the higher ups decided on running a very large-scale exercise involving many hours of continuous duty. It will be remembered by most men as the hottest two days of the year and because of the size of the exercise many Home Guards taking part did not see any sign of activity. For a very long time it cropped up again and again in the forms of lectures, etc. A sad feature was that Volunteer H. Moate of the Manea Platoon was accidentally killed by a passing train whilst engaged on the exercise.

In the late part of 1941 the authorities realised that, with the growth of the Home Guard from a number of ill-armed men to a reasonable-sized army, some better form of accommodation was essential. Requisitioned buildings were handed over to units all over the country and at last the company moved to the Church Rooms, Chatteris, and had an office, drill room and store all in one block of buildings. Provision of better accommodation brought better training, and the posting of Adjutants and P.S.I.s to all battalions helped the often harassed Home Guard officer; in this company the instant improvement was apparent. In 1942 compulsion was brought into being and the thinning ranks of the company were swelled by numbers of men who were directed, the majority proving themselves good soldiers after their enrolment. The year was not outstanding in any other way and finished up with the split of the 2nd Battalion and the passing of old B Company to that of A Company, 3rd Ely.

Before ending this short history of the company it is well to remember some of the lighter side of life and without mentioning names most men will remember or identify the following incidents.

An agitated volunteer reported that he had put a round through somebody's electric stove. Investigation showed that he had most certainly put one straight through the oven door, the bullet having wrecked the inside of the oven and made its exit through the back. The owner behaved like a brick, made no claim and let the matter drop. The police were informed that this man had a rifle with a very long firing pin, and when the bolt was pushed forward to extract the round, the cap was struck and fired. They accepted the yarn, but a small smile was seen on the inspector's face when this ingenious explanation was made. The other volunteer did much the same thing, only in his case the bullet went through a man's bedroom and out by the roof. The man was in bed with his wife and was actually heard to say, "Get up Missus, the — are here at last."

No history of the company would be complete without a mention of the spot known to the particular section as Aroma Lodge or Lavender Cottage, a place guaranteed to put paid to any number of Huns, by reason of its persistent scent.

It is invidious to mention any man from such a grand crowd of fellows, but all will recognise the bloke who could produce such wonderful concoctions from a few potatoes, tinned salmon and a frying pan, who on many many occasions spent the greater part of the night cooking up grub for the guard, and any other odd blokes who cared to muck in. His wonderful ability to scrounge not only for himself but for the company, put him in the first line of "Those who by devious means, acquire." All was fish to his net. It was not wise to ask "Where did they come from," but to walk through the stores looking neither to left or to right, and blame the fairies

for the quite unauthorised equipment that appeared from time to time.

D COMPANY

The company was formed in May, 1940, and was known as March No. 2 Company L.D.V., under the leadership of Mr. H. W. Ingham.

At the onset there were only four rifles per patrol, so that these men carried out their duties armed with all manner of weapons, the chief of which was enthusiasm. Training was carried out under men who had seen service in the last Great War and very good progress was made in that direction.

By September, 1940, the company was firmly established, recruits were still coming in and enthusiasm for the task in hand was still very high. Parades and lectures were well attended and a number of small exercises were carried out under the supervision of Mr. Ingham. The first consignment of boots arrived in September, and the first issue of battle dress serge began to trickle through; this was greatly appreciated owing to the fact that it was not too warm patrolling all night in the Fens in a suit of denim overalls, and a civilian overcoat and cap, but guards and patrols were maintained and sufficient battle dress serge had arrived by January, 1941, to clothe the whole company.

Mr. Ingham left in January, 1941, with all good wishes of the Company and a presentation took place as a token of the esteem in which he was held by all volunteers. Vol. T. Bloy took over temporary command of the company from that date.

It began to be apparent that the time was near when the L.D.V. would have to be put on a more organised footing and it was no surprise when it became known that it was to be taken over by the military authority and known in future as the Home Guard, with Home Guard battalions in every area. Under the new organisation this company became D Company of the 2nd Isle of Ely Battalion Home Guard with its headquarters at Ely, and had for its Commanding-Officer, Lt.-Colonel C. Posth. Ranks were introduced at this time into the Home Guard and companies organised on the platoon basis, and the following appointments were made:—

To be Capt. & Temp. Com. Coy. Vol. T. Bloy.

„	Lt. & Pln. Comdr.	..	Patrol Leader	H. S. Ash.
„	„	„	„	G. B. Brittain.
„	„	„	„	G. W. Dobson.
„	„	„	„	G. Lloyd.
„	„	„	„	P. Howes.
„	„	„	„	J. A. Orbell.
„	2nd. Lt.	„	„	C. A. Taylor.
„	C.S.M.	..	..	Vol. J. Buzzard.
„	C.Q.M.S.	..	..	„ S. Orbell.
„	Company O.Room Corpl.	„	„	R. E. Saunders.

Other N.C.O.s were appointed in proportion to the size of the

newly-formed platoons. Parties of men were being taken to Upwood and other points for firing instruction and practice, and a range was built up at Whitemoor for firing to be held there at weekends. There was not a great deal of S.A.A. for expenditure in those days, but every man made the very best use of that available. In July the company took part in the exercise. This exercise was greatly appreciated by all who were available to take part, and many lessons were learned which should help if necessity arose.

It was learned soon after this exercise that the new Company Commander, Mr. J. E. Fisher, who had served as a patrol leader and platoon commander with the 17th City of London L.D.V., would be taking over command of the company, and on 15th August, 1941 a full company meeting was held to give him a welcome to his command. Mr. Fisher intimated that he was hoping to reorganise the company, and with the help and loyal co-operation of all ranks he hoped to create an enthusiastic and disciplined body of men. He also gave some account of what the members of his old battalion had accomplished during the London Blitz. During this meeting Capt. Bloy intimated that he was leaving the Railway Company's service to take up an appointment as Labour Officer under the Ministry of Agriculture and that in consequence a vacancy would occur for a 2nd in Command and full-time servant. Nominations to fill this position were taken and voted on with the following result:—

2nd Lt. C. A. Taylor ..	No. 4 Platoon ..	23 votes.
Sergt. H. Copeman ..	Mobile Platoon ..	11 "
Sergt. J. Feary ..	No. 4 Platoon ..	3 "
Sergt. H. Reeve ..	No. 1 ..	1 "
C.S.M. Buzzard ..	No. 1 ..	1 "

Major Fisher therefore declared 2nd Lt. Taylor elected to fill the post of 2nd in Command and full-time servant, if his release could be obtained. 2nd Lt. Taylor obtained his release with all good wishes from the chief of his Department and commenced his duties on 23rd August, 1941. At this time the company's position was found to be very unsound and a great deal of hard work lay ahead to bring about the desired reorganisation. Its strength was found to be only paper strength, and a great deal of arms, clothing and equipment could not be accounted for, but after many months of hard work and long hours 2nd Lt. Taylor was able to place the position of the company on a correct footing.

With the introduction of compulsory enrolment in the Home Guard every man was given the opportunity to resign before a given date if he so desired, and this company was all but halved by this process. Most of the men who resigned were either men who were physically unfit to carry out the extra duties that they would be asked to perform or men over 60 years of age who had come forward

at the onset to do their bit in answer to the first urgent call for volunteers. To these men we owe a debt of gratitude for all they had done in those early days. The company strength had fallen to 266 on the 22nd March, 1942, but many recruits were expected to be enrolled under the Ministry of Labour directions.

Training was a very difficult problem during these days, due to the long and varied hours being worked by members, and the absence of indoor accommodation for lectures, etc. The authorities had promised to do all they could in this direction, but a central hall was badly needed during the winter months. In November the position of company administrative H.Q. at Whitemoor had become untenable and application was made for somewhere suitable to conduct the company's affairs. As a result of this we obtained another building for our H.Q. and this was taken over at the end of the month. On the social side several Smoking Concerts were held, football and cricket matches played and 22 miniature shooting matches and competitions arranged. No. 4 Platoon became the first holders of the D Company Officers Cup for the best miniature range team. The company met and defeated in home and away shooting matches, the Local Police, March Rifle Club, Friday Bridge Company of 1st Battalion and a team from the Beds. and Herts. Regiment. During this year also our number of officers had increased with Capt. J. A. Hislop as Medical Officer.

17th January, 1943, saw the birth of the 3rd Isle of Ely Battalion Home Guard with headquarters at Chatteris, our company becoming D Company of that battalion. The series of Winter Training Classes for Junior Leaders are proving a success and reflect great credit on those N.C.O. instructors who are conducting the classes and we hope to put into practice what has been taught at these classes.

Looking back to the now remote days of 1940 we feel that much progress has been made in the right direction and though not trained to the desired extent, we feel that, if called upon, the company will give a good account of itself and do all that it is expected to do.

C COMPANY

C Company came into being when the country answered Mr. Eden's appeal. March enlisted its quota and the police took charge of the register of volunteers. On that famous Sunday morning equipment consisting of a rifle, a denim suit and a few rounds of ammunition was issued by Inspector Hill at the police station.

Colonel Cutlack appointed J. B. Levett to command the company, and an attempt was made to organise March into areas—five platoon commanders and a 2nd in Command, Mr. F. E. Phillips, were appointed, E. Johnson, the Rev. G. Breed, J. B. Forgan, N. K. Everett and P. Gubble were made responsible for their various platoons and

districts. A company quartermaster appeared by the name of R. Bassham and an attempt was made to keep records of stores.

Training became an urgent necessity and the lack of experienced personnel was soon felt; rusty veterans of the last war were the "mainstay." Platoon commanders fortunately had had some sort of experience. School playgrounds, roads, market squares, etc., were used and proved very useful and H.Q. of platoons were established. The company area was large, from Doddington to the 20 Foot River—too large in fact. Changes were quickly taking place. Gubble of Doddington fell out and his place was taken by Hatch, while Mr. Breed gave way to Mr. Bridgstock. By the summer the company consisted of:—

O.C.	..	..	..	Levett.
2nd in Command	..	..	..	Phillips.
No. 1 Platoon	..	..	..	Crane.
No. 2	..	..	..	Forgan.
No. 3	..	..	..	Bridgstock.
No. 4	..	..	..	Johnson.
No. 5	..	..	..	Phillips.
No. 6	..	..	..	Everett.
No. 7	..	..	..	Hatch.

The Army in the shape of the Royal Fusiliers came and went, their help being valuable. The Engineers came and stayed over Christmas, 1940. Two platoon commanders, Forgan and Everett went on the square for six weeks, accompanied by Hinde from Wimblington. As equipment became available to the Army, so also the Defence Force got their bit, a change became apparent and the force found itself asking for more of everything, men, materials, equipment, ranges, and guidance, medical officers, boots, Lewis guns, courses, etc., and with the help of the Beds. and Herts. Regiment under Lt.-Colonel Edmunds, C Company of 2nd Isle of Ely Battalion Home Guard became for the first time a force that could do something.

Classes, lectures for first aid, even dinners and parties became the life of the company. Officers and men went to Army courses and Beds. and Herts. school classes became the order of the day, the siren with its turn out "the order of the night." The county was patrolled and all preparations to repel the enemy were made complete—one can almost still hear the Company commander saying "Don't take prisoners boys," as he threw out ball ammunition to all and sundry. When a siren called out the company one night in August, 1940, our commander lost £5 as a gift to Lt. Woods for taking his first prisoner, but this one alas came from heaven, dropped from an aeroplane after a raid on Liverpool.

In August, 1942, Major Dawbarn took command of the company from Major Levett who had reached the age limit, and later handed

over to J. B. Forgan with E. Johnson as 2nd in Command. The Beds. and Herts. moved off but left a spirit which still prevails, and the debt to Lt.-Colonel Edmunds and his officers is still paid by the company disappearing at the command, "Down, crawl, observe and fire."

101 CAMBS. A.A. BATTERY

The 1st November, 1942, is regarded as the birthday of 101 Cambs. Home Guard A.A. Battery, R.A. A few days previous to this date Battery H.Q. had been opened at 4, Bridge Street, and three Home Guard officers had been appointed, Major B. F. Pratt, Battery Commander, Capt. S. J. Moss and 2nd Lt. S. Greenburgh. The Regular component was established under Major M. G. Hogg, and began training the Home Guard recruits, while Capt. J. E. Chamberlain took up his duties as Administrative Officer.

Recruitment proceeded apace, many of the recruits being ex-artillery men, and training under officers and N.C.O.s of the Regular component was carried on despite difficulties of accommodation and lack of equipment. The accepted formula of these days was "One table plus two forms equals one secret weapon," but by mid-December the Battery was established in a hall complete with the necessary training equipment. Potential officers' and N.C.O.s' classes were formed and training went with a swing. To an onlooker the hall on training nights must have presented a strange sight; two to three hundred men, some in uniform, some in civilian clothes, some at drill, some attending lectures, but all doing a job of work. The enthusiasm was unmistakable and the two hours of training passed quickly and ended in adjournment for well-earned refreshment.

Early in 1943 the officers and N.C.O.s' classes were invited by a sister battery to attend a practice camp and fire; for a short time these lucky few could speak with an air of authority, but before long the entire battery had attended practice camps. During this period the training fell entirely on the Regular components; some of the latter were "Verrry Scotch Instrrrructorrss" and there were many amusing incidents of mistaken orders. To these officers and N.C.O.s the battery owes a debt of gratitude.

During April in addition to training parades the Home Guard assisted in constructing the gun site, and the comments of the old sweats when digging, filling sandbags and smoothing paths took a reminiscent turn. On 1st May, 1943, A Troop of No. 1 Relief manned the site and from that day 101 Cambs. Home Guard A.A. Battery have been on duty each night.

In the course of the year several changes have taken place. Major H. A. C. Goodwin took over command of the Regular Battery in October and Capt. P. H. Wellum took over the duties of Administrative Officer in July. In the Home Guard Battery, Major B. F.

Pratt who had worked untiringly in forming the battery felt obliged, owing to pressure of work, to relinquish the command, and Major S. J. Moss took over from him in March. Major Pratt continued his active participation in the battery as No. 1 Relief Commander.

The battery celebrated its first birthday with only one regret—they had no kills to their credit.

2007 MOTOR TRANSPORT COMPANY

June, 1943. After nearly four years of war the tide had turned and through blood, sweat and sand Rommel was being chased clean out of Africa by a weight of armour that could not be stopped. Miles away our Russian allies were continuing an inexorable advance. Ships, planes, guns, shells, tanks and all the other impedimenta of war were flowing in an ever-increasing torrent from the workshops and production lines. Millions of fully-trained men were in reserve and hundreds of aerodromes and army camps had been completed. The murmur of our first efforts had become a deafening steadily increasing roar that could not be stilled—that was when 2007 was born. Many people asked why—everything was going all right—they wouldn't be wanted. But to us the first few, it soon became apparent that the better things were going, and the further our fighting men chased the enemy the more likely would be the need of such Companies as 2007, not necessarily to stem an invasion but to feed our invasion.

So the training began with a handful of lance-corporals, many of them raw recruits, and in charge of them, the first member of the company, Major Dickerson, who set about this task for which he had been chosen, with the same dogged spirit of determination and perseverance which has marked his civilian transport career. It was not a matter of picking up loads, carrying and dropping, but a conversion of theory and practice from civil to military methods. All the rules had to be learned and on that hot June Sunday when the — C.M.T. Company, R.A.S.C. instructors took us in hand it was like starting school all over again. There was the same thrill of anticipation backed by a fear lest minds had become too accustomed to the one road to be jolted on to a new highway with a new code. But no, every word was absorbed, notebooks and pencils were busy and lectures on mounted drill, camouflage, maintenance, map reading, convoy theory and practice, location, etc., were put over in a way that enthused us all and made us impatient to impart the knowledge to others. We had practical instruction too, and contrary to first ideas those Sunday mornings and afternoons in the country, whether on camouflage, convoy, maintenance or T.E.W.T.S. passed all too soon.

By then 2007 M.T. Company had been weaned and was growing daily bigger and stronger. Recruits were coming in, records had

to be kept, H.Q. and stores had to be formed at Cambridge, Ely and Wisbech, where the three platoons were based. There were a hundred and one rules and regulations to be observed, returns to render and new methods of correspondence. Most of this initial work fell to the lot of Major Dickerson. It was not a clean-cut job, but one which demanded sorting and re-sorting, hours of work cancelled by one stroke of the pen. On those nights for him there must have been dream processions of enrolments, transfers, Part 2's, vehicles with earmarks all over them, and ever echoing in the background the principles of the R.A.S.C. Transport. But the child grew, commissions came through, Lt. Tribe worthy commander of No. 3 Platoon at Wisbech, Lt. Newport, No. 2 Platoon at Ely and Lt. Peak putting every effort into the formation of No. 1 Platoon at Cambridge.

Those were hectic days—foot and arms drill under the guidance of other Home Guard battalions. ready assistance and help in technical matters from our foster parent the 6th Cambs., lectures by our own officers and N.C.O.s to the steady stream of recruits flowing in, formation of a workshop platoon in Cambridge under the command of Lt. Moore, the welcome addition to company H.Q. staff of Capt. West, with more than three years' of Home Guard experience, and the commissioning of two more of the original N.C.O.s, Irwin and Bell for H.Q. duties on the "Q" and "A" sides respectively. There were verbal battles for many things from motor cycles to black boards, the earmarking of all the civilian lorries, times when the storm clouds gathered and things seemed in a hell of a muddle and nobody seemed to want to get us out of it. But there was always a way out and the sun shone once more. Sub-District H.Q. and T.A.A. guided us in those days and Colonel Pearson was a helpful friend at all times.

Then Column was formed and No. 2 Platoon lost Lt. Newport, who was promoted Lt.-Colonel to command Column, with Capt. Greg, R.A.S.C. liaison officer, holding the reins of our progress and guiding us as well as other M.T. Home Guard companies which were by then formed. So Lt. Drake took charge of No. 2 Platoon at Ely and the great work went on. Those days of training were marked by a memorable occasion when on 31st October, the company was inspected by Eastern Command officers, who saw all three platoons make a convoy get-away and a demonstration of welding, de-ditching and first aid by workshops and No. 1 Platoon. The words of Colonel Thompson and Colonel Thornton-Kemsley at the completion of the inspection were sufficient reward for the hard work which had been necessary by officers and men to get the company to such a state of efficiency in a few short months.

But it was not all work, as the great advantage of a social side was soon realised and at the time of writing two very successful smoking concerts have been held by No. 1 Platoon, drawing the

men into closer touch with the leaders and making for greater unity and strength of purpose. This was especially evident when at the most recent function Capt. Greg, R.A.S.C. liaison officer, dropped a hint of things to come and the audience of upwards of 120 personnel replied with cheers and cries of "Let's get at it"! To those who remembered the tiny seedling 2007 of June, 1943, it must have brought to mind the lines of the song in the well-known musical comedy, "Start me with ten, who are stout-hearted men, and I'll soon find you ten thousand more."

Our ranks will not swell to that number, but there are certainly stout hearts there, men who have cheerfully endured five winters of black-out driving, have cleared bombed dockyards, carted thousands of tons of steel, stone work, ballast and bricks to build our aerodromes, sugar beet and grain for the nation's larder, timber for pit-props and have slogged 10 hours a day for seven days a week shovelling coal. They have started work at 6 a.m. and got home again at 7 p.m., had a meal and turned out again for firewatching or some other civil defence duty, many of them having been seasoned Home Guard members before the 2007 came into being. Yes, through more than four years of war they have played their part, keeping the wheels turning ever onwards through sunshine and snow, moonlight and pitch blackness, sometimes through smoking ruins, sometimes with bombs falling around them. There have been grumbles and grouses, but it is said that to grumble is the Englishman's right and a sure sign that everything is O.K. When things are really wrong he has no breath to waste for useless words. Those are the men of the 2007. The officers are the same, men from the haulage and motor industries who have had to adapt themselves to many changes, men who when there were no spare parts available, have had to make them to keep their fleets going, not for personal gain, but to keep the wheels turning towards ultimate victory. They also have had 12- and 14-hour days, working beside their men, doing repairs till midnight or chasing a breakdown to save time and loads next day. That is why, after four years of work and war this new force in the Home Guard imbues one with confidence in its future activities.

The generosity of vehicle owners has also been gratifying. When "Action Stations" is sounded the 2007 will not turn out with standard vehicles in the column, which have been subject to R.A.S.C. maintenance since they came from the workshops, they may not have white banjos and lights for night convoy work. They will be the old Contemptibles—3 tonners which have been carrying 100 per cent. overload wherever they were asked to go to get the country's defences built and prepare for the offensive to follow. But they have been kept sound and are still sound and ready for any job that comes along. And so, as this is being written, the 2007 is alive and throbbing with the spirit that will win

A FEW OLD COMRADES



Lt.-Col. J. Gray
7th Cambs. Bn.



Major J. Weatherhead
7th Cambs. Bn.



Major D. H. Beves
8th Cambs. Bn.



Sergt. A. E. Gray
5th Cambs. Bn.



Pte. J. Wiseman
6th Cambs. Bn.



Lt. H. C. R. Newman
6th Cambs. Bn.



Armourer S/Sgt. J. Widdas
T.A.A. and Cambs. Zone



Mr. A. Humberstone
T.A.A. and Cambs. Zone



Lt. F. G. Peak
2007 M.T. Company

A FEW OLD COMRADES



C.S.M. A. South
2nd Isle of Ely Bn.



C.S.M. H. A. Copeman
3rd Isle of Ely Bn.



C.Q.M.S. E. L. Godfrey
3rd Isle of Ely Bn.



Captain J. Jopling
4th Cambs. Bn.



Lt. J. Paterson
4th Cambs. Bn.



Bandmaster W. E. Cant
5th Cambs. Bn.



Major F. B. Brooke, M.C.
1st Cambs. Bn.



Major H. M. Richardson
1st Cambs. Bn.



Lt. T. Cooper, D.C.M.
2nd Cambs. and Suffolk Bn.

A FEW OLD COMRADES



Q.M.S.I. C. Hosegood
8th Cambs. Bn.



B.S.M. W. Rogers
101 A.A. Battery



Captain B. F. Pratt
101 A.A. Battery



Lt. A. E. Bailey
2nd Cambs. and Suffolk Bn.



Major C. H. Bowers
3rd Cambs. Bn.



Major R. Thompson
3rd Cambs. Bn.



R.Q.M.S. S. J. Martin
1st Isle of Ely Bn.



Sgt. H. Peck
1st Isle of Ely Bn.



Sgt. W. G. Rushbrooke
2nd Isle of Ely Bn.

the war. Almost fully mustered and trained the times may not be far ahead when these workers by day and soldiers by night will be asked to undertake yet another job, a job that will put them with the front line Regulars. We who have seen the seedling grow to a powerful tree are not afraid of the nature of the work that may be asked of them, or of the sacrifice involved. It will be done for Britain and 2007—the name that sounded so strange and hard to remember in a classroom on a hot June afternoon in 1943, but which is now as familiar as the name of one's own firm and its honour as jealously guarded.

Perhaps in 1963, 1973 or even 2007 some of us will be able to look back down the years, and jog our memories on the sixteen tasks, VTM and density, or strain our eyes through our reading glasses for a church with a tower on a $\frac{1}{2}$ -in. map. Already there will be a story to tell our grandchildren, perhaps if we are lucky there will be a much more exciting narrative to unfold. It is in the lap of the gods—but this is 1944 and the 2007 M.T. Company is ready to start up and away.

POSTSCRIPT

It is evening in the early spring of 1944. Away beyond the old windmill are the blue hills of Hertfordshire where our neighbours are on guard. There to the left is the water tower at Linton and to the right the hill above Haslingfield. If you walk to the top of another hill a mile away you may look first over those valleys that reach out to our kinsmen in Suffolk, and thence glance north-east to Ely Cathedral, that great grey bastion, symbol of the Fenman's defiant isolation.

Look north again and you will see Cambridge shrouded in the evening mist. From those two viewpoints you will have been privileged to look over the glorious country of Cambridgeshire and the Isle, and you will have seen the territory of the Home Guard.

In a few minutes will be heard the drone of the avenging bombers bound for Germany. The tide has turned and is lapping at the enemy, not yet racing in as it will, but surely turned. We know that Hitler is doomed and he knows it too.

On the road close by two little parties have just passed. The first a patrol of three Home Guardsmen on their bicycles. The second a group of four Italian prisoners returning from their work on the land, the only enemy at liberty on Cambridgeshire soil.

The darkness is falling and with it nature's peace comes over your home. In the air is the promise of peace from war at no far distant time, when all that you have toiled for will be safe at last.

Well done, Home Guard!

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MR. EDEN'S APPEAL—14TH MAY, 1940

"I want to speak to you to-night about the form of warfare which the Germans have been employing so extensively against Holland and Belgium—namely, the dropping of troops by parachute behind the main defensive lines. Let me say at once that the danger to us from this particular menace, although it undoubtedly exists, should not be exaggerated. We have made preparations to meet it already.

"Let me describe to you the system under which these parachute raids are carried out. The troops arrive by aeroplane—but let it be remembered that any such aeroplane seeking to penetrate here would have to do so in the teeth of the Anti-Aircraft defences of this country. If such penetration is effected, the parachutists are then dropped, it may be by day, it may be by night. These troops are specially armed, equipped, and some of them have undergone specialised training. Their function is to seize important points, such as aerodromes, power stations, villages, railway junctions and telephone exchanges, either for the purpose of destroying them at once, or of holding them until the arrival of reinforcements. The purpose of the parachute attack is to disorganise and confuse, as a preparation for the landing of troops by aircraft.

"The success of such an attack depends on speed. Consequently, the measures to defeat such an attack must be prompt and rapid. It is upon this basis that our plans have been laid. You will not expect me to tell you, or the enemy, what our plans are, but we are confident that they will be effective. However, in order to leave nothing to chance and to supplement, from sources as yet untapped, the means of defence already arranged, we are going to ask you to help us, in a manner which I know will be welcome to thousands of you. Since the war began the Government have received countless enquiries from all over the Kingdom from men of all ages who are for one reason or another not at present engaged in military service, and who wish to do something for the defence of the country.

"Now is your opportunity. We want large numbers of such men in Great Britain who are British subjects, between the ages of 17 and 65, to come forward now and offer their service in order to make assurance doubly sure. The name of the new force which is now to be raised will be the 'Local Defence Volunteers.' This name, Local Defence Volunteers, describes its duties in three words. It must be understood that this is, so to speak, a spare-time job, so there will be no need for any volunteer to abandon his present occupation.

"Part-time members of existing civil defence organisations should

ask their officers' advice before registering under the scheme. Men who will ultimately become due for calling up under the National Service (Armed Forces) Act may join temporarily, and will be released to join the Army when they are required to serve. Now a word to those who propose to volunteer. When on duty you will form part of the Armed Forces, and your period of service will be for the duration of the war. You will not be paid, but you will receive uniform and will be armed. You will be entrusted with certain vital duties, for which reasonable fitness and a knowledge of firearms are necessary. These duties will not require you to live away from your homes. In order to volunteer, what you have to do is to give in your name at your local police station; and then, as and when we want you, we will let you know.

"This appeal is directed chiefly to those who live in small towns, villages, and less densely inhabited suburban areas. I must warn you that, for certain military reasons, there will be some localities where the numbers required will be small, and others where your services will not be required at all. Here then is the opportunity for which so many of you have been waiting. Your loyal help, added to the arrangements which already exist, will make and keep our country safe."

APPENDIX B

8560 (A.G.I.A) 15/5.

1. As stated in S. of S's broadcast, Government have decided to form unpaid Local Defence Volunteer Force for local defence in U.K. excluding Northern Ireland.

2. Force will be organised by existing military areas. There will be at H.Q. Home Forces, a G.S.O.I., at Command H.Q. (excluding A.A. Command and Aldershot Command) a G.S.O.II, and at Area H.Q. a G.S.O.III. Each of these H.Q. will select provisionally the officers for these posts and forward the names in due course to the Military Secretary, War Office, for confirmation. In addition, at each Area Headquarters there will be an unpaid Area Organiser.

3. Each military area will be divided into Zones, and each Zone will contain a number of groups. An unpaid volunteer organiser will be in charge of each Zone and each Group. Area Commanders will immediately get in touch with Regional Commissioners, and with their help will divide the Area into Zones and Groups.

4. The Area Commander in consultation with the Lord Lieutenant will appoint a volunteer area organiser, and volunteer organisers to take charge of the Zones and Groups.

5. Area Commanders will inform Zone and Group Organisers of the number of volunteers to be raised in each Group. The number will depend on:—

(a) The rifles allotted.

(b) Whether it is necessary to allot more than one man to a rifle.

"WE ALSO SERVED"

- (c) The number of other suitable weapons available locally.

C.-in-C., Home Forces will indicate to Commands the number of rifles available for their areas. Areas will sub-allot these rifles to Zones and Groups.

6. Zone and Group Organisers will establish their H.Q., and the Group Organiser will proceed to select men, from the list at local Police Stations, in preparation for enrolment. Details of procedure of enrolment will be forwarded later.

7. The qualifications of volunteers will be as follows:—

- (a) They must be men between the ages of 17 and 65.
- (b) They must be British subjects.
- (c) They must be of reasonable physical fitness. (Unpaid personnel of the Civil Defence Services may register their names but will not be enrolled unless they have previously obtained the written permission of their civil leaders.)

8. Group organisers will be responsible for safeguarding of arms, and ammunition, which may be stored with the nearest military unit, if one exists in the locality, or at a T.A. Drill Hall, or local police station.

9. The services of volunteers, including voluntary Area, Zone and Group Organisers will be unpaid. The issue of free petrol for necessary official journeys may be allowed for Area, Zone and Group Organisers in approved cases. Detailed instructions will be issued later.

Provision will be made for a scale of compensation for volunteers who are injured while on duty.

No rations will be provided.

Uniform of the denim overall type and field service caps will be available on loan to personnel while on duty.

10. Addressed to HOFOR, LONDON, ALDERSHOT, EASTERN, NORTHERN, SOUTHERN and SCOTTISH COMMANDS by teleprinter.

London, East Anglian, Home Counties, Chatham, Northumbrian, Yorkshire, North Midland, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Highland, Southern, South Western, Salisbury Plain, Portsmouth, South Midland, East Lancs, W. Lancs., N. Wales and S. Wales Areas and Orkney and Shetland Defences by telegram.

Repeated Jersey, Guernsey and Alderney Districts by telegram.

Copies to:—

Admiralty.

Air Ministry.

Ministry of Home Security.

Home Office.

APPENDIX C

THE WAR OFFICE,
HOBART HOUSE,
LONDON, S.W.1.
18th May, 1940.

27/Gen/2594 (A.G.I.A.).

SIR,

1. I am commanded by the Army Council to refer to War Office teleprinter message 8560 (A.G.I.A.) dated 15th May, 1940, in connection with the formation of an unpaid Local Defence Volunteer Force.

2. This Force will form part of the Armed Forces of the Crown, and will be subject to Military Law. But, the intention of the Army Council is that for the purposes of administration, the outstanding features should be simplicity, elasticity and decentralised control, coupled with the minimum of regulations and formalities.

3. There will be no establishment for the Force. There will be no officers nor non-commissioned officers in the ordinary Army sense of these terms. There will be no pay nor other emoluments. The engagement of the volunteer will be for a period not exceeding the duration of the present emergency, but may be terminated by the competent authority at any time, or at his own request on his giving fourteen days' notice in writing.

4. The numbers to be enrolled will depend entirely upon the numbers available and the numbers required. The latter will be fixed by Area Commanders, but it should be remembered that in addition to the total numbers required to bear arms in an emergency, additional personnel will be necessary for clerical and similar administrative duties.

Volunteers, when enrolled, will be formed into sections. The normal approximate size of a section (which will be the basic unit) will be ten men, but rigid adherence to this figure is unnecessary.

Sections will be grouped into platoons and platoons into companies, according to local defence requirements.

5. Volunteer Area organisers (in conjunction with volunteer Group and Zone organisers) will select, and nominate to the Area Commander, individuals for appointment as Company commanders. The Company commanders will then appoint platoon commanders and section leaders.

When the initial organisation has been completed and Company commanders are appointed, the retention of volunteer Area, Group and Zone organisers, referred to in paragraph 4 of War Office urgent postal telegram 8560 (A.G.I.A.) dated 15th May, 1940, will be reconsidered.

6. All appointments will be acting and unpaid. Appointments below that of Company commander will be made or relinquished at the discretion of the Company commander. Appointments of

Company commanders and above, and their relinquishments, will be effected on the authority of the Area Commander.

7. No commander of a unit or sub-unit of the Local Defence Volunteer Force will have any power of command over any personnel other than his juniors in the Local Defence Volunteer Force.

8. Enrolment of volunteers on the prescribed form will be effected by Company commanders who are authorised to accept applicants, as soon as possible. When completed, these forms will be kept by the Company commanders. There will be no Record or Pay Office organisation, and no forms, other than the enrolment form (with record of service on the second page thereof), are contemplated at present.

Relevant extracts from the enrolment forms and any further particulars or records affecting volunteers will be entered into a Company book to be kept by the Company commander, and where it is necessary to do so, extracts from these books will be entered on the volunteer's enrolment form.

All casualties or appointments will be reported to the Company commander and will be entered on the back of the enrolment form. In the event of known casualties of a serious nature the next of kin will be informed by the Company commander.

9. Volunteers whose conduct has been satisfactory but who may be found to be surplus to requirements, will be granted a discharge under the heading "Services no longer required—surplus to requirements." The competent authority for purposes of termination of engagement under this heading will be the Company commander.

Instructions in connection with discipline, and termination of engagement for disciplinary reasons will be issued separately.

10. Arms, ammunition and uniform will be issued under Command arrangements to Areas, who will be responsible for arranging their storage, distribution and safeguarding. The utmost care will be exercised in the selection of suitable store places.

Separate instructions will be issued with regard to the provision of arms, ammunition and uniform.

11. Instructions dealing with travelling, travelling allowances, petrol issues, etc., supplementing those contained in War Office urgent postal telegrams 20/Misc/1763 (F.4.a) dated 17th May, 1940 and 53/Gen/5277 (S.T.2) dated 27th May, 1940, are being issued separately.

12. Claims for compensation on account of disabilities attributable to service will be dealt with under the regulations for the time being in force. Those regulations will provide for the same terms in the case of death or permanent disablement, as are applicable to private soldiers and their dependants.

13. A specimen of an Enrolment Form is attached. Supplies of these forms are being despatched at once direct to Area Headquarters for distribution to Company commanders.

14. The Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces, is responsible for the operational control, organisation and training of the Local Defence Volunteer Force.

I am, Sir, Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) G. W. LAMBERT.

Copy to:—The Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces, etc.

APPENDIX D

EXTRACT FROM MR. CHURCHILL'S SPEECH, TUESDAY, 4TH JUNE, 1940

"I have myself full confidence that if all do their duty, and if nothing is neglected, and if the best arrangements are made, as they are being made, we shall prove ourselves once again able to defend our island home and ride out the storm of war and outlive the menace of tyranny, if necessary for years, if necessary alone. At any rate, that is what we are going to try to do. That is the resolve of His Majesty's Government—every man of them. That is the will of Parliament and the nation.

"Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen, or may fall, into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail, we shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills, we shall never surrender—and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island, or a large part of it, were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle until in God's good time the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the Old."

APPENDIX E

EXTRACT FROM MR. CHURCHILL'S SPEECH, TUESDAY, 18TH JUNE, 1940

"I expect that the Battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilisation. Upon it depends our British life, and the long continuity of our institutions and our Empire. The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us. Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this island or lose the war.

"If we can stand up to him all Europe may be free, and the life of the world may move forward into broad sunlit uplands; but if we fail then the whole world, including the United States and all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new dark age, made more sinister and perhaps more prolonged by the lights of a perverted science. Let us, therefore, address ourselves to our duty, so bear ourselves that if the British Commonwealth and Empire lasts for a thousand years men will still say 'This was their finest hour'."

APPENDIX F

LIST OF HONOURS AND AWARDS

C.B.

Colonel W. P. Cutlack, T.D., D.L. Chairman, Territorial Army Association and Commander, Isle of Ely Sector.

M.B.E.

Capt. C. R. M. Cannon .. 3rd Cambs. Battalion Home Guard.
 Major F. J. Ford .. 2nd Cambs. & Suffolk Battalion Home Guard.
 Major N. Higgins .. 5th Cambs. Battalion Home Guard.
 Capt. H. A. Munns .. 5th Cambs. Battalion Home Guard.

B.E.M.

Pte. G. F. Harrington .. 2nd Cambs. & Suffolk Battalion Home Guard.

CERTIFICATES FOR GALLANTRY OR GOOD SERVICE

1st Cambs. Battalion Home Guard.

Pte. H. F. Barton, Sergt. G. Ellwood, Sergt. D. Haward,
 Pte. W. J. Whitehead.

2nd Cambs. & Suffolk Battalion Home Guard.

Pte. K. W. Bailey, Pte. R. Baldwin, C.Q.M.S. C. Chester,
 Sergt. E. F. Cobbin, Major F. J. Ford, Lance-Corpl. R. J. Marsh,
 Sergt. A. G. Neal, C.S.M. J. L. Podmore.

3rd Cambs. Battalion Home Guard.

Sergt. I. G. F. Ball, Sergt. A. W. Melbourn, Lance-Corpl. D. W. Nuttall, C.Q.M.S. G. Pilgrim.

4th Cambs. Battalion Home Guard.

Sergt. P. C. Barnes, Sergt. W. G. Coningsby, Lt. A. B. W. Dawson, C.Q.M.S. J. A. Fairchild, C.S.M. T. E. Jacklin, C.S.M. R. J. Lobban, Lt. J. A. V. Neave.

5th Cambs. Battalion Home Guard.

R.Q.M.S. E. C. Cox, Lt. A. J. Ede, Sergt. G. F. Farrington,
 Pte. A. Foster, Sergt. H. P. Hale, Corpl. E. R. Haslop,
 C.Q.M.S. F. Johnson, C.Q.M.S. P. E. Tolliday, C.Q.M.S. A. T. Wallace.

6th Cambs. Battalion Home Guard.

Corpl. F. G. J. Bird, Lance-Corpl. E. G. Clayton, Pte. F. H. W. Elvin, Corpl. H. S. Francis, Pte. J. Hayward, Pte. G. I. Hemmings, Corpl. R. Johnson, Pte. E. J. Pipes, C.Q.M.S. A. F. Platten, Sergt. B. Starkings, Lt. A. E. Warner, C.Q.M.S. H. B. Weller, Pte. C. B. Wiseman.

7th Cambs. Battalion Home Guard.

C.Q.M.S. G. S. Hogben, Sergt. A. E. Mudd, Sergt. F. R. Muirhead, C.S.M. Pryce Lewis, C.S.M. H. Sale, C.Q.M.S. T. L. Shearing.

1st Isle of Ely Battalion Home Guard.

Major I. B. Burgess, 2nd Lt. P. B. Ottewill, C.Q.M.S. T. H. Peck.

2nd Isle of Ely Battalion Home Guard.

Sergt. A. E. Bidwell, Sergt. W. Chester, 2nd Lt. R. Lane, Sergt. W. G. Rushbrooke, C.S.M. W. C. Sawle, C.S.M. A. South, Lt. G. H. Ward.

3rd Isle of Ely Battalion Home Guard.

C.S.M. C. E. Miller.

